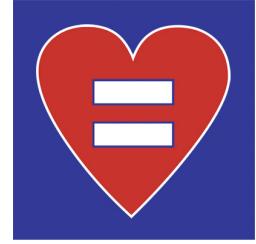


WHY IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF 2010 vs 2012, YET.



Santa Barbara County's Strategic Alliance for Marriage Equality (S.A.M.E.) urges it's statewide and grassroots counterparts to focus not on whether to go back to the ballot in 2010 or 2012 but on getting organized and building trust within the LGBT and allied communities.

Our experience as the only Southern California county to defeat Proposition 8 involved several key elements. First, with the benefit of being the media test market for the Let California Ring campaign, we started our local organizing a year before Election Day. We built a winning coalition of local, socially progressive advocacy, political and faith-based organizations. Our "process" was based on patience, aggressive listening skills and constant broadening of our resources and participants. When we received tools from the No On Prop 8 campaign we made sure they were appropriate for our community and if not, localized them or did not use them. Clergy and progressive community leaders were the face of our campaign. Also, we raised the necessary funds to make our own media buy to advertise our local coalition's endorsement of a "NO" vote.

Adequate preparation time, strategic coalition building, trust, transparent processes and accountability structures, locally guided resource collection and allocation, sufficient fundraising: these were the keys to our success. We believe that these, at minimum, must be in order statewide before we consider a ballot initiative. We must also always foreground the broader goal of social equality over the immediacy of any one ballot initiative or election date. Any such measure must make strategic sense in the trajectory of our larger movement for equality.

The greater statewide marriage equality movement needs to take the time to get better organized and build trusting coalitions. There needs to be more dialogue and research around the funds needed and the feasibility of raising money in today's economic climate. Trusting and communicative relationships need to be developed between the larger organizations and the local grassroots as the current climate of mistrust and friction is not conducive to an effective campaign. And most importantly, a truly transparent structure that is responsive to the needs of the local grassroots and at the same time is facilitated by a group of people with the vested authority to make the difficult decisions must be developed.

We will not be prepared for 2010 or 2012 without immediately focusing on organizing and building strong, respectful coalitions within the LGBT and allied communities. This must be our first priority.

We all share the same goal: to re-establish California to its rightful place as the national leader in social equality. We can only do this if we act collectively and cohesively to energize our constituents, change minds and make sure that on voting day, OUR voters get to the polling place.

We look forward to working with you.

In solidarity,
S.A.M.E. Santa Barbara

For more info. contact S.A.M.E. at 963-3636 ext 121 or visit www.thesamelove.org.

Strategic Alliance for Marriage Equality is a volunteer program of the Pacific Pride Foundation of Santa Barbara a non-profit foundation operated exclusively for charitable purposes, with tax exempt status as described in Section 501(c)3 of the IRS code.