

October 3, 2008

Dear APIQWTC Member,

May this message find you in good health and spirits! The summer has come and gone . . . and here we are in October, a month away from one of the most important elections in decades. Though the country is focused on the presidential race, everyone is also looking to California to see how the rights of LGBT people will -- or will not -- be affirmed.

For those of you who attended our Summer BBQ, you know that we formed a "No on Prop 8" committee in APIQWTC in order to do our part to insure the defeat of this dangerous state constitutional change that could ban same-sex marriage. Our goal: GET OUT THE VOTE, *and especially reach the API swing vote.*

Asians/Pacific Islanders make up a substantial sector of the swing vote, as we are most likely to be undecided, undeclared or unwilling to disclose how we will vote. Furthermore, APIs have been unwilling to talk about any political issue over the phone, including API registered Democrats when they have been telephoned by the No on Prop 8 state committee.

This is where APIQWTC comes in. Over the years, all of us have established a circle of support among colleagues, friends and API family members. Many of us have been publicly open about our sexuality and some of us have recently married. We know where we stand, as an LGBT person, in our own families and networks of friends.

Prop. 8 will hurt us. Now it is our turn to call on these same family members, neighbors, colleagues and friends for support. Call and ask them to help us stop Prop. 8. Then ask them to take a further step to contact their own networks of personal friends and other extended family members to do the same. On Nov. 4, the only thing that will count will be VOTES. We need every vote. ***This year, let the voice of our community say loud and clear, "In California, all people are equal!"***

So, we are asking all APIQWTC members to call your personal friends and family members with this message. Then keep the momentum up by sharing with others what you are doing (post a message to NoOn8@yahogroups.com). To help, we are enclosing stickers, information and links to websites with API photos and videos. (A message like this with the links will also be posted to the APIQWTC email list.)

Sincerely,

Marion Abdullah
Ginny Eng
Jennifer Greene
Crystal Jang
Barbara Jue

Deb Jue
Lori Lee
Heidi Li
Koko Lin
Trinity Ordon

Maya Scott-Chung
Pueng Vongs
Margot Yapp
Sydney Yeong

SCENARIO & TALKING POINTS

I. From a couple; calling a family member:

Hi. You know I'm gay and we () have been together for () years. [And we got married, too.] Well, Prop. 8 on the November state ballot will hurt me only because I am gay. It will ban marriage rights for gay people. I'm calling to ask you to help me. Please vote No on Proposition 8 and help me contact our other family members and friends to do the same.

The supporters of the ban say they are doing this in "the name of the family." They are not the authority on family. You and I are family. In API families, all children are welcome! We must stick together and help each other.

2. From a single person:

Hi. I'm calling to ask you to vote No on Proposition 8, the measure up for vote in November that would ban same-sex marriages. What you might not know is that not only would it not recognize gay marriages but it would rewrite the California constitution to recognize that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

As you know, I am gay and I am single, but that doesn't make this proposal any less important for me. I hope to be in a committed relationship and have the chance to be married (Funny option: why do you think I spend so much time at SUB clubs, online dating sites, bars, potlucks) I would like the social recognition that comes with marriage between a man and a woman.

Really what it comes down to is dignity for all gays and lesbians. Having two separate categories: domestic partnership and marriage is not equal. That's why I hope you'll vote against Prop. 8.

WHAT IS THE LAW NOW?

On May 11, 2008, the California State Supreme Court ruled: therefore conclude that in view of the substance and significance of the fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship, the California Constitution properly must be interpreted to guarantee this basic civil right to all California, whether gay or heterosexual, and to same-sex couples as well as to opposite sex couples.

WHO IN THE API COMMUNITY SUPPORTS LGBT PEOPLE?

Many API organizations say NO on Prop 8, such as the Japanese American Citizens League and Organization of Chinese Americans. The Asian American Bar Association and 62 Asian Pacific American organizations supported our legal challenge.

API Equality, a SF organization fighting for equal marriage rights, fair treatment, and overall acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is a fully-funded, fully-staffed project of Chinese for Affirmative Action, one of the nation's oldest and most reputable API civil rights organization.

RESOURCES:

1. See: <http://apiequality.org> for videos and read many stories of API gay people getting married.
2. For color photos in 6 languages of true API, Black and Latino family stories strengthened by California's recent married lesbian and gay couples: http://www.letcaliforniaring.org/site/c.ltJTJ6MQluE/b.4431247/k.F9AD/Print_Ads.htm
3. For API Christians who support the freedom to marry, see Network on Religion and Justice for Asian Pacific Islander Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People, <http://www.NetRJ.org>

Saturday, October 11, 2008, 11 am-2 pm
Chapel, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley, CA

**A PAN-ASIAN BLESSING & CELEBRATION OF
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER LGBT FAMILIES:**

*An Interfaith Event on National Coming Out Day hosted by the
Network on Religion and Justice for Asian & Pacific Islander LGBTs*

In Asian & Pacific Islander cultures, family is important. And to us, family means extended family. Family is inclusive. At the Network on Religion and Justice for API LGBTs, we understand an API LGBT family to include any family in which a member is API and a member is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

If you are an API LGBT couple, or any individual or family group that identifies as all or part of an API LGBT family - if you are a straight parent of a API LGBT child, if you are a daughter, son, sister, brother, auntie, uncle, cousin, grandparent, church-family member, longtime co-worker or neighbor - and you love and support your LGBT family member(s), we invite you & your family to join us for a blessing and celebration of your family.

Our celebratory interfaith blessing will take place at the multid denominational chapel at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, and will be conducted by an alliance of API religious leaders of various faiths.

Come join us to bless and celebrate API LGBT families!

Rev. Elizabeth Leung, PhD
CLGS Coordinator for NRJ-API-LGBT

E-mails are usually read and replied Tue., Wed., Thur. NRJ-API-LGBT is the Network on Religion and Justice for Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People (www.NetRJ.org, <<http://www.netrj.org/>>) - a joint project of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS) and the PANA Institute, both at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, USA.