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Survey Indicates Asian American Opposition to Gay Marriage Ban

By: **Ivan Natividad**, Oct 18, 2008

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Asian American voters in California overwhelmingly oppose Proposition 8, which would recognize marriage only between a man and a woman, according to a survey released this week.

Fifty-seven percent of Asian Americans likely to vote were against the measure, with 32 percent in support; eleven percent were undecided. The data was collected only from California voters, and was part of the larger National Asian American Survey.

Supporters and adversaries of Proposition 8, one of the most hotly contested measures on November's ballot, have already pumped over \$41 million into the fight — more than the combined total spent in the 24 states where similar measures have been put before voters since 2004.

While some funds have gone to voter outreach, much of it has already been used on statewide media campaigns. Proponents recently released a television ad portraying a young girl coming home from school and showing her mother a picture book depicting the marriage of two princes. It ends with the girl saying, "And I can marry a princess."

Tawal Panyacosit Jr., director of the San Francisco-based LGBT rights group API Equality, said many supporters' ads are false, misleading, and aim to scare voters.

"It's a lot of misunderstanding, and we need to do everything in our power to get as much education out there so voters can make an educated decision," Panyacosit said.

Supporters say that same-sex marriage undermines the value of marriage and that the California Supreme Court decision in May striking down the ban (which California voters authorized in 2000) subverts the will of the voters. Attempts to contact ProtectMarriage.com, which sponsored the measure, were unsuccessful.

Lance Toma, executive director of San Francisco's API Wellness Center, said that if passed, the proposition would have huge ramifications in the APA and LGBT communities.

"There is a deep stigma in our community towards this issue, and if passed it could potentially keep young APAs in the closet," Toma said. "When they see that their lives are not validated, they won't feel empowered to live their lives to the fullest."

Toma continued: "People haven't been getting hurt by other people getting married. The [May] decision allows equality for all people to experience a bond of commitment that everyone should have the right to pursue."

Panyacosit said defeat of the measure would be a "victory for civil rights and for equal rights," adding: "It would give everyone a freedom of choice to live our lives, and to have no individual groups' rights above another."

Comments

1. It is heartening to learn that California Asian Americans oppose Proposition 8, which would trample on a basic civil rights of millions. As a researcher and blogger of API and LGBT issues (Conversations: <http://erwinsdeleon.blogspot.com/>) and as a Filipino immigrant, I am pleased to learn that Asian Americans are aligned with the majority of the populace when it comes to the issue of LGBT rights.

—Erwin de Leon on Oct 18, 2008

2. I'm very glad that we as a community are taking a stand against this proposition - this sort of change is based on the same kind of thinking that prevented interracial marriages for a long time. We must oppose such narrowmindedness at all turns - it's not just un-Asian American; it's just plain un-American.

-Ina Roy on Oct 18, 2008

3. I applaud and am profoundly proud our Asian American brothers and sisters for believing in equality. I too, as a Latino American know the pain and fear of institutionalized discrimination authored and established by those who shall remain nameless. We'll call them... the majority.

We stand together with our Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters and others in oppressed communities to fight this battle and defend all of our civil rights. We will not tolerate hate. We will all speak out against discrimination. We will fight injustice. We will never be silenced. We will never surrender.

-Dexter Torres on Oct 19, 2008

4. Dexter, I hope we can really count on that! I am VERY afraid of the Latino vote. From what I understand, the majority of Latinos support prop 8, citing religious beliefs as their reason. It is depressing that Latinos may be siding with the backers of prop 8 - MANY of those backers ALSO back putting a fence around America and deporting Latinos, particularly Mexicans. I am shocked that ANY racial group that has faced being looked at as 2nd class citizens by bigots, would even THINK about voting for Prop 8

-Keith on Oct 22, 2008

5. Keith, momentum is coming. Fair-minded Latino leaders in Los Angeles are strong vocal opponents against Prop 8. I am doing everything I can here in my community of San Diego to win hearts + minds. LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, a Latino, is going to be featured in radio and TV ads targeted towards our community very soon. We're going to win this thing.

-Dexter Torres on Oct 23, 2008

6. I've talked to so many Latinos during the last week. An overwhelmingly majority respond "Sure. I think anyone who loves anyone else should be happy and get to do what they want. Why should I care?" Consider the Latino community, at least in San Diego, delivered.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VY0Cqh-TBrw>

-Dexter on Oct 24, 2008

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