



Same-Sex Marriage Divides Small City

New America Media, News Report, Rupa Dev, Posted: Oct 27, 2008 [NT Review it on NewsTrust](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Editor's Note: Less than a week after thousands of mostly Asian supporters of Proposition 8 descended on Cupertino, California in a church-organized demonstration of their opposition to same-sex marriage, a diverse group of residents of this usually quiet city staged a counter rally against Prop 8 and in support of same-sex rights. Rupa Dev is a contributor to New America Media.

Advertisements on our website do not necessarily reflect the views or mission of New America Media, our affiliates or our funders.

CUPERTINO, Calif., -- Recently Long Ong, 31, was waiting at a stoplight in nearby Saratoga when a group of young protestors rallying against same-sex marriage walked up to his car and asked, "Voting yes on Prop 8?" Ong said he was not, so they got angry and called Ong "faggot" and other slurs.

Proposition 8 is one of many initiatives on California's ballot for the Nov. 4 elections, but none has generated as much heat or publicity. If approved, Prop 8 would eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry and would define marriage as legal only between a man and woman.

Ong's confrontation with protestors on Oct. 19 was just a few miles from a Cupertino rally organized by Prop 8 supporters from some 100 churches. Called "Stand for Marriage," the rally attracted more than 4,000 Chinese Christians, many carrying signs declaring such messages as, "God created marriage! One man, one woman!"

But Cupertino, a small city with a large Asian population also has supporters of same-sex marriage. Some Prop 8 opponents began organizing to counter the impact and message of the church-sponsored rally. Cupertino resident Gloria Nieto, director of community affairs for San Jose's Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center, moved quickly to orchestrate protests at five local major traffic intersections last weekend.

By midday Saturday, more than 80 people, including Ong, had converged on one site to promote their message in the heavily trafficked corridor. Chanting "No on eight," protestors waived signs in English and Chinese that proclaimed "Honk for equality."

Despite the large turnout by Asians at the pro-Prop 8 rally, a recent poll of California voters conducted by the National Asian American Survey found that 57 percent of Asian Americans are likely to vote against PROP 8.

Steve Bok, 21, a Chinese-American social worker with the National Association of Social Workers, considers opposition to same-sex marriage another form of discrimination. "Most of my family and friends are all against Prop 8 because they once experienced the Chinese Exclusion Act," he said. "Prop 8 is the Chinese Exclusion Act of 2008."

Jill Lan, a Cupertino resident of Chinese descent joined the protest with husband Rob Green. "The church is advocating "Yes on 8," she said, "but we all know individuals that would be affected by Prop 8 being passed."

"We believe in a fair society," Green said, "and just like interracial marriages and women's rights, this is a civil rights issue and this is something I wanted to take an unequivocal stance on."

Many Cupertino families with young children joined the protest. "I've seen those misleading early education ads the pro-8 campaign is running, and I just feel it's better to talk to my kids about these issues directly, on my own," said Diana Farsai, who brought her twins Arman and Ariana.

"People should be allowed to marry whomever they want," said Arman, a fourth grade student at Christa McAuliffe Elementary school in Cupertino. "There are four kids in my class with gay family members."

Jessica Rose wanted her three children aged 6, 8, and 10, to understand the basic issues involved even though they are complicated. "It's just really hard to explain to my kids that some of our community members, despite being good people, hate gay people," Rose said.

Related Articles:

[Anti-Gay Harrassment Still Strong in High Schools](#)

[Latino Leaders Say No to Prop. 8](#)

Page 1 of 1

[Return to Normal Version](#)

[Share / Save](#)

[Send Page to Friend](#)
[Subscribe to NAM Newsletters](#)

[bookmark this on Delicious](#)
be the first to bookmark this page!

New America Media is a division of [Pacific News Service](#) | [Copyright](#) © Pacific News Service | Powered by [DW Alliance](#)