

LGBT Outreach Planning for 2006

www.outfordemocracy.org

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The DNC is committed to fund organizers on the ground in every state in 2006. Working in every state is crucial, and every state should have as part of their outreach strategy, a plan for outreach to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Community.

There are some states, however, that are of particular interest in the 2006 election; where LGBT issues are likely to play into the election, and where LGBT voters and volunteers can play an important role. The chart on the following page provides some information to help identify these states. The attached chart is not meant to be a conclusive analysis, but rather a starting point for the LGBT community to discuss state strategies for 2006. In looking at these states, we used the following information:

Close Margins in the 2004 Election: Sixteen states listed where the 2004 election had a very close margin in the Presidential race: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Census Data: Census data can't give us a complete picture of the LGBTI community, but does give us information about self-identified same-sex households. Census data for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's) is used for this chart. These are areas where we are likely to have the biggest impact (see notes below). Fifteen of the sixteen states have MSA's with large, active LGBT communities.

Stonewall Democrats Presence: Of the sixteen states listed above, fourteen have active state or local chapters of Stonewall Democrats. The two exceptions are West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Governor Races: There are open or close races in at least six of these states, they are: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Senate Races: There are open or close races in at least four of these states: Florida, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Ballot Initiatives: Of these sixteen states, anti-gay ballot initiatives are being considered in at least six of these states: They are: Arizona, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. An anti-gay marriage ballot initiative is being considered in Minnesota and will definitely happen in Wisconsin.

Marriage Equality: Of these sixteen states, Marriage Equality court cases are in process in both Iowa and Washington.

Every State Democratic Party should have an LGBT outreach plan for 2006, and every State Party should have LGBT relevant information and/or contacts listed on their website. The DNC needs a full time staff person at the DNC whose focus is LGBT Outreach and who can monitor and encourage progress in this goal. In addition to this, the following states should be more closely examined:

Where We Are Right Now

Which states are the ones where an investment in LGBT specific outreach will have the biggest impact? Here are some thoughts based on the attached chart. Of course, this information will change in the coming months.

Tier 1, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Florida: These states all have open or contested Governor and Senate Races; and face potential anti-gay ballot initiatives. With strong LGBT communities and active local Stonewall Democrats Chapters, there is a strong LGBTI volunteer base to draw from in these states. Investing in an LGBT-focused staff person in these states would be a wise investment for the DNC. Stonewall Democrats has already committed resources to Pennsylvania. Liberty PA and the National

Stonewall Democrats (PAC) are working with a local network to build the infrastructure to defeat Rick Santorum, and keep Pennsylvania blue in 2008. Additional resources are needed to support the work being done in Pennsylvania, and put staff in place in Ohio and Florida.

Tier 2, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin: LGBT Voters have an opportunity to play an important role in each of these states, which are likely to have close races in 2006. These states would greatly benefit from targeted, strategic, LGBT Outreach.

Further, LGBT relationships will be a factor in three of these states. Iowa has a pending marriage equality court case. Wisconsin will have a marriage equality ballot measure. Missouri has a potential anti-gay adoption ballot measure. It will be important for these states, and for the Democratic Party in general, to find new ways to talk about Marriage Equality as this movement goes forward.

Next Steps: National Stonewall Democrats has called upon the Democratic National Committee to immediately appoint a senior LGBT political staff person as part of its American Majority. Such a staff person is needed to make sure every State Party has an LGBT outreach plan for the 2006 election. This staff person is also needed to assist and advise in a strategic LGBT Outreach strategy for the 2006 election cycle that focuses resources in states where we can have the biggest impact.

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Additional Information

Census Data Background Information

The 2000 census data does not collect enough information to present a comprehensive picture of the LGBTI community. However, using the data provided we can identify the number of individuals who identify themselves as living as a same-sex couple. In looking at the Census Data, I focused on the Top Metropolitan Areas as identified by the percentage of same sex couples. A metropolitan area is defined as one with more than 50,000 inhabitants or a Census-Bureau defined urbanized area with at least 50,000 inhabitants and a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000¹.

Why did I pull the data from Metropolitan Areas? As Chris Cooper states in his memo 'More Bang for the Buck, LGBT Voters and the DNC':

Research from the National Sexuality Resource Center (NSRC) demonstrates that LGBT voters represent a stable voting block in urban, metropolitan centers and represent the most critical voting demographic for some urban districts. This geographical concentration often means that LGBT voters are overlooked as an 'in-the-bag constituency' in national elections.

However, demographic analysis of census data versus voting patterns suggests that there are large pockets of potentially extreme liberal LGBT voters in metropolitan centers that are not voting precisely because of they view their votes as a foregone conclusion. In national elections, where electoral votes are parsed on the number of votes across the state, the geographical concentration of these LGBT voters represents a massive, untapped pool of Democratic votes that have the potential to swing key states. In other words, there are more potential Democratic votes in Missouri concentrated in the LGBT communities of St. Louis and Kansas City than votes of other constituencies in the state's rural counties – and they can be had more easily precisely because they are geographically concentrated.

Open & Close Governor and Senate Races

This information in the chart is subjective and subject to change. Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Ballot Initiatives

Detailed information on Ballot Initiatives is available at the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center:
<http://www.ballot.org>.

Marriage Equality

There are currently court cases in process in Washington State, California, Iowa, New York, Connecticut, New York, and Maryland. For most recent information on current cases, visit:
<http://www.marriageequality.org>

¹ With the exception of New England, where the total metropolitan population is defined as at least 75,000.