

ELECTION

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WI Light

VOTE NOVEMBER 3

SPECIAL ELECTION SECTION ★ October 22-November 4, 1998

Wisconsin Must Lead Again!

It is our turn again. Gay and Lesbian leaders around the country say they are looking to Wisconsin's LGBT community to help put in place political leaders who will fight for Gay and Lesbian equality. Once again the "Gay Rights State" can show the rest of America just how things should be done.

We can do that by turning out at the polls in massive numbers. We can do that by turning to our friends, our co-workers and families, letting them know what is at stake. We can do that by returning our friends to Congress and the State legislature, while we send those whose actions and statements show they do not stand for equality packing.

It is no wonder that so many Gays and Lesbians around the country look to Wisconsin. In many places even candidates for minor offices are running on homophobic platforms. In far too many places in this land of the free, the choice put before Gay and Lesbian voters is one of supporting candidates who say ignore us or supporting candidates who denounce us. Here in Wisconsin things are different. Here we have real choices.

Certainly, there are issues other than Gay civil rights on the minds of average voters and on some of our minds, too. But it is difficult to think of those when some of our so-called leaders denounce us on a regular basis. It is difficult to worry about who is right on cutting taxes to help families when we are not legally allowed to marry. How can we believe in politicians who compare us to criminals?

We have heard the Republican Senate Majority leader call us sick and diseased. We have heard some in Congress call it special rights when the President outlawed federal job discrimination against us. We have heard Senators say that a highly qualified openly Gay man nominated for an ambassador's post should not be confirmed because he is Gay.

We have heard all of this and more. But now it is our turn to speak. Not on national TV shows, not with expensive ad campaigns, but with our votes and our voices. Those voices must be raised at the work place, at the family dinner table, and with our friends - even our Gay friends who otherwise may not vote.

If our voices aren't raised, things will get much worse before they get better. Make no mistake about it. Although Gay civil rights issues have not often been publicly raised here, it is only because they are being raised privately in fundamentalist churches and among Christian Coalition activists around the State. Those who stand against the fight for Gay and Lesbian equality have learned from the past. They don't want to look intolerant. They hope we will be fooled into a false sense of security.

We must not let that happen. Just as we did with the nation's first statewide Gay civil rights law, and in so many other ways, Wisconsin must lead the way again. Be turned out, not turned off. Vote on November 3.