NYS Marriage a Lesson for Advocates Everywhere

June 27, 2011 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

At 11:55 p.m. on Friday, June 24, N.Y. Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed marriage for same-sex couples into law. Needless to say, an enormous amount of effort went into this victory.

The New York Times did a great job at explaining just how much effort it took:

> *The story of how same-sex marriage became legal in New York is about shifting public sentiment and individual lawmakers moved by emotional appeals from gay couples who wish to be wed.*
>
> *But, behind the scenes, it was really about a Republican Party reckoning with a profoundly changing power dynamic, where Wall Street donors and gay-rights advocates demonstrated more might and muscle than a Roman Catholic hierarchy and an ineffective opposition.*
>
> *And it was about a Democratic governor, himself a Catholic, who used the force of his personality and relentlessly strategic mind to persuade conflicted lawmakers to take a historic leap.*

Undoubtedly, there was a set of circumstances in this story that are not easily replicated. That said, I believe the legislation itself is a template for other states.

Of the many factors that led to marriage equality in New York State, I am sure that the most potent combination was the leadership of Cuomo and the teamwork of advocates.

And there is the lesson for advocates everywhere: To get the big stuff done, you've got to work together. I pray that both HIV/AIDS and LGBT advocates nationwide will learn that important lesson.

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