Obama, Evolve After November 6th

March 19, 2012 By Peter Staley

Evolve already! That's what many gay activists and bloggers are insisting. Obama must come out and support gay marriage now, during the election.

What's the rush? We're winning this fight, big time. Pushing Obama to support gay marriage today, as opposed to eight months from now, will have virtually no effect on the timeline to our inevitable victory on this issue. But it could cost him plenty of votes, and thus, the election.

Obama is by far the most pro-gay president in our history (can anyone dispute this now?), so where exactly are the voters that will switch from Romney to Obama solely because Obama comes out in support of gay marriage? To believe those voters exist, you'd have to find single-issue die-hard marriage equality fanatics that like what they see in Romney right now.

Meanwhile, if Obama is pushed to publicly support gay marriage during the election, all the bible-thumpers out there will find some much needed fervor for getting to the polls and pulling that lever for the Mormon.

I've heard the argument that making this a big election issue now will turn off independents who are sick of the culture wars, pushing more of them Obama's way. If that's true, then the "war on women" is already doing that job. We all hope that those wishy-washy independents will start voting our way on gay marriage, but we have very little evidence that they've done so in the past (quite the opposite, actually). Are we willing to bet that enough of them will vote our way this time -- enough to outweigh all the votes from the poked Christianist hornet's nest?

I've been an AIDS activist most of my adult life, and the most important thing any of us can do right now for people living with HIV/AIDS in this country is to get Obama re-elected. The single most important piece of legislation for their lives in the years to come is Obamacare, which is under vicious assault from a misinformation campaign led by FOX News and the Republican Party.

Weigh that against hearing Obama say he loves us even more than he already does. I can wait for his final kiss.

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