Why LGBT Americans Advocate for Our Civil Rights

December 31, 2008 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

A comment about LGBT civil rights in response to a previous post inspired me to respond with a separate entry. (Nice when that happens!)

Here is an excerpt from the comment:

As an hiv- straight guy who is married with children, it is nice to read the differing opinions of different people. I understand that you are homosexual, why is it that (it seems to me), looking from the outside in, that all the gay community talks about is gay rights? Are the issues of the serious recession we're in not in vogue to talk of, is it that you all still feel oppressed? Honestly not trying to be rude here, but give me a break, you guys seem to be crying an awful lot about proposition 8 when if the economy gets much worse all the hiv/aids orgs. will see budget cuts, typically first on the slashing table. If I know anything from my experience with gay people it is that you all are usually a very bright, intelligent, outside

of the box thinking type people. The country could use your help on more pressing issues than gay rights, don't you think? Don't get me wrong, I understand the importance of basic human rights, gay marriage included, but Obama's pressing issues are highly unlikely to have anything to do with gay rights and hiv/aids.

There's no doubt that the issue of LGBT civil rights has been in the media quite a bit lately. I don't know if that's what you're referring to when you say that "all the gay community talks about is gay rights" but I hope so. If not, then I suppose you must be expressing frustration that we just won't go away.

My response to "is it that you all still feel oppressed?" Yes. The recession is currently issue number one for all Americans. However, if civil rights were being denied to straight people, I have a feeling that you would be a strong civil rights supporter for straight people, despite a weak economy.

Even though I agree that LGBTs "are usually a very bright, intelligent, outside of the box thinking type people" I have to take a moment to consider whether that's a compliment or a condescension. And that goes for your entire comment.

The rights of African-American people and women were held up for generations because there were always other priorities, which really just means that society at large didn't want to deal with it.

There will always be excuses for why civil rights are delayed. If LGBT people have learned anything from past civil rights struggles, it's this?if we do not continue to beat the drum of equality on our own behalf, no one else will.

As for President-elect Obama, I believe that his list of "pressing issues" will indeed include LGBT civil rights and HIV/AIDS. Everything won't happen all at once, but one by one I believe they will be addressed.

Click here for a comprehensive review from the Human Rights Campaign of all LGBT-related federal legislation.

Click here to visit Change.gov to find out what President-elect Obama has promised HIV-positive and LGBT Americans.

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