

NO ON 8 **STOP THE MARRIAGE BAN**



NO ON 8 TOOLKIT

Resources to help you talk to friends, family, and others about why they should vote NO on 8

You can be a part of this campaign today. What we need most is for undecided voters to hear from those of us who are personally touched by this. They need to see the harm this ballot initiative holds made real by hearing from *you*.

This campaign will be won by each of us, individually, talking to our friends, family and colleagues – and even strangers – about why it is so very important for all of us to vote NO on Proposition 8 this November.

In order to help you with your personal efforts to help stop the marriage ban, the No On 8 Campaign has assembled this toolkit.

In this toolkit, you will find:

- 1) FIVE Things You Can Do to Defeat Prop 8**
- 2) Sample Letter Home**
- 3) Sample Letter to the Editor**
- 4) Sample LGBT Newsletter, Blog, or Email Listserv Articles**
- 5) Sample General Newsletter, Blog, or Email Listserv Articles**



FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO DEFEAT PROP 8

Defeating Prop 8—the marriage ban—will require thousands of people working together across California to educate and rally voters to Vote No on Prop 8. Here are five things you can do to help defeat this harmful initiative. By doing even one thing on this list, you will make a difference.

Give. The fight to defeat Prop 8 is going to be hard-won. It's going to take passion, commitment, time, and extensive resources. Please give as much as you can to the campaign today and in the coming weeks. We need to raise enough money to wage a massive public education effort to convince the majority of Californians, the most populous state in the nation, to Vote No on Prop 8. Every dollar counts, so please contribute today and again in the coming weeks.

Write. One of the most effective ways to create change and influence people is by telling your personal story. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, or submit an article to a newsletter or blog and tell your community why Prop 8 is so harmful to you and those you love. We need to put a face on this issue. This isn't just about politics and laws, this is about our friends and family—those closest to us.

Volunteer. This effort takes committed individuals working hard at the grassroots level. We need volunteers from across the state to hand out information at local events and make phone calls to voters educating them about defeating Prop 8—the marriage ban. Sign-up to volunteer your time to educate the public about how Prop 8 harms loving and committed couples across California.

Talk. Talk to your friends, family, coworkers, fellow church-goers, neighbors, classmates—anyone and everyone—about Voting No on Prop 8. You have a wide circle of influence, use it! By simply talking to people, you increase awareness about the issue in your community and can help influence public opinion. The more people we talk to about this issue, the more votes we have on our side. It's a simple, cheap, and effective way to help defeat Prop 8.

Register. It all comes down to this. Make your voice count and get engaged. Register to vote NOW and get your friends and family to register too. And make sure to show up at the polls on November 4. We need Californians who support fairness and equality to vote in November against this harmful change to our constitution.

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LETTERS HOME

One of the most powerful ways to create change and build support is to share your personal story. When you connect with your families, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and community members, please take a moment to talk about how important it is to defeat Prop 8. Personalize this as much as possible—share your experience as an LGBT person, as a couple, as a family, and as an ally.

There is no better ambassador in this campaign than **you**. Your circle of influence. Your friends, family and neighbors. The people you went to school with, worship with, and work with will listen to you more readily than a TV ad or radio commercial. In fact, defeating this measure relies on all of us being willing to talk about the harmful impact of Prop 8.

Below is a sample letter home, which you can send via email or post. ***Please take the time to personalize your letter and tailor it to your community of friends and family.***

Dear [*Friends and family*],

I am writing to you because of a very serious issue facing voters this November in California. Proposition 8 is an initiative on the ballot that, if passed, could eliminate the right to marry for same-sex couples. I'm writing to ask you to do whatever you can to help defeat it.

You know how important being treated equally is for every member of our community. Your friendship and love has sustained me [*if you are partnered, you can add name and names of any children*] many times over the years—through good times and hard times. Our family is now facing one of the most difficult challenges we have ever faced, and one that will directly impact my life and the lives of many, many more. That's why I'm asking for your support again. Please, vote No on Prop 8.

All same-sex couples in California now have the same rights and protections that all other committed and loving couples enjoy. I can't tell you how powerful that is, to share the same fundamental freedoms as everyone else, to no longer be treated differently. That fairness is so important. I firmly believe that committed and loving couples who want to accept the responsibility that comes with marriage should be treated just like everyone else. [*Please insert a line or two about you and how this affects you as an individual and your partner, and your family and community*].

This issue means everything to me, my family and those I love which is why I am asking you now to Vote NO on Proposition 8—the marriage ban.

Our Constitution was designed to provide equal protections under the law for all of us in California and SHOULD NOT be used to treat people differently. That's what we think this election is all about—fairness and equality. Your love and support for me [*and my family*] has meant the world to me [*us*].

We've come a long way, but the fight is far from over. We need your support now more than ever. Please, Vote NO on Proposition 8 and tell others to do the same. Together, I am positive that we can help make our state a more accepting and loving place to live.

With love,
[*Your name*]



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why are letters to the editor important?

Opinion pages, especially letters to the editors, are among the most closely read sections of newspapers (both print and online). Letters from readers help guide newspaper editors in determining their coverage—the issues they will cover in news stories and editorials. Additionally, policy-makers and elected officials use these pages to gauge public opinion. A well-written, well-timed letter to the editor can impact and shift public opinion.

How can I write an effective letter?

Do your homework. Be sure to read the letters in your newspaper to get a sense of the length and style of the letters they print. It is important to understand the newspaper's editorial position and coverage in order to submit an effective letter. Frequently, newspapers list their letter submission guidelines on the opinion section of their website.

When writing your letter, make one central point clearly and concisely. Letters should be short, no more than two paragraphs (100-200 words). Start off strong by clearly stating your position in the first sentence. In the first paragraph, state your point and explain why the issue is important to you and the local community. Then support your position with facts. End by restating your point and with a call to action: Vote NO on proposition 8.

Make sure to have someone else proofread your letter.

If you are writing directly in response to an article, be sure to reference the headline and author. It is important to be timely, so submit your letter the same or next day after the article appeared, not a week later. However, your letter must stand on its own. Not all readers will have read the article you are referencing.

Do I have to sign my letter?

Yes. Newspapers do not run anonymous letters. You will be required to include your name, address, email address, and phone number. While the newspaper will not print your home address, they will request it for verification purposes.

Will the newspaper edit my letter?

Possibly. Editors may edit your letter for clarity and space. It is possible that an editor will cut part of your letter if it is too long. That is why it is important to send a brief and well-written letter to avoid possible cuts and edits, which you may disagree with.

Will my letter get printed?

By submitting a letter to the editor, you are starting a dialogue in your community. Encourage others to write letters to your newspaper as well. When editors receive multiple letters about an issue, it demonstrates that the community is interested in the topic and editors are likely to print one or two letters. Even if your letter is not the letter selected to appear in the newspaper, the point-of-view and position will. That is the ultimate goal.

After you submit your letter, read the newspaper to see if it appears. If a week passes and the topic hasn't been discussed, feel free to call or email the newspaper's editorial department to follow up.

SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Below are some sample points to make in letters to the editor. Please take the time to personalize your letter and tailor it to your newspaper's coverage and submission guidelines.

Dear Editor,

The essence of our Constitution is equality and freedom. The freedom to express yourself, the freedom to worship however you choose, the freedom to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, and the freedom to marry who you love. These are fundamental freedoms. Everyone should be able to enjoy these freedoms equally. I'm voting No on Proposition 8 because I believe in our Constitution.

Dear Editor,

Our California Constitution must guarantee the same freedoms and rights to everyone. How can anyone be against that? For me, treating people differently is just wrong. I'll vote NO on Prop 8 to protect everyone's equality. It's a simple matter of fairness.

Dear Editor,

Equal protection under the law is the foundation of American society. We learned it in school, we recited it in our classrooms, and we must live up to it now. Proposition 8 will create an unequal class of citizens who are denied the dignity and respect that marriage brings. That is not equal protection under the law. Prop 8 denies equality, freedom, and fairness. That's why it must be defeated and why I'm voting NO on Prop 8.

Dear Editor,

Regardless of how anyone feels about marriage for gay and lesbian couples, people should not be singled out for unfair treatment under the laws of our state. I agree with Senator Obama and Governor Schwarzenegger about this. No matter what I personally think about marriage, it's wrong to ban it for one group of people. That just makes sense to me and my wife [OR HUSBAND]. People who are in love and getting married aren't a threat to us. Even if you don't agree, surely we can all agree that people should be treated the same under our laws. We're voting NO on 8. It just makes sense.

Dear Editor,

I think Marriage is a fundamental freedom in the pursuit of happiness that our constitution guarantees. And I don't think it should be up for a vote. California voters should not take away the right of gays and lesbians to commit to and marry those whom they love. I'm voting NO on Prop 8—let's not take away something is so fundamental—love and marriage.

Dear Editor,

We don't need Prop 8. We don't need more government in our lives. What we *need* is a little more love in our world. People should be able marry the person they love. That's why I'm voting NO on 8.

Dear Editor,

Proposition 8 would ban gays and lesbians from getting married—denying them the dignity and respect that marriage conveys to everyone else. That's just plain wrong. We are a nation of equals

and the basis of our country is to treat everyone the same. Prop 8 won't do that and that's why Prop 8 should be defeated. Vote NO on 8.

Dear Editor,

Proposition 8 bans gay and lesbians from marriage and that is just plain wrong. Even if people disagree on this issue, we should stay true to our form of government that protects everyone equally. Our Constitution is founded on equality. I don't care what proponents say—they just want to force their beliefs on others. Prop 8 seeks to ban marriage, treat others differently, and take away the freedoms and rights of gays and lesbians. We must vote NO on 8.

Dear Editor,

Despite what the other side says, domestic partnerships in California are NOT the same as MARRIAGE. When you're married and your spouse is sick or hurt, there is no confusion: you get into the ambulance or hospital room with no questions asked. You don't have to explain to someone what domestic partnerships are, or whether they apply when your loved one is ill or dying. In everyday life and especially in emergencies, domestic partnerships simply are not enough. Only marriage provides the certainty and the security people can count on in times of great need. That's why I'm voting NO on 8 and hope thousands of others will join me. Don't be fooled by the other side, marriage and domestic partnerships are NOT equal.

Dear Editor,

Domestic partnerships are not marriage. Marriage is marriage. Everyone who chooses to should be able to enjoy it. I'm straight and my wife [OR HUSBAND] and I can't see why anyone would vote yes on this. It's just not right. Join us in voting NO on 8.

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NO ON 8 **STOP THE MARRIAGE BAN**



LGBT NEWSLETTER, BLOG, OR EMAIL LISTSERV ARTICLES

Submitting an article to be printed in a newsletter or posted to a blog or email group is an effective way to spread the word to **VOTE NO ON PROP 8**.

Where can I place an article?

Many community and social groups have printed and electronic newsletters and websites—everything from school alumni groups, to PTA organizations, parenting groups, to support groups, to athletic teams, to book groups, to church groups. Whether your group has a printed bulletin or a Yahoo group, you can use it as a forum to talk about defeating Prop 8.

How to write an effective article:

Like writing letters to the editor for a newspaper, be sure to do your homework in order to write an effective article. Read the articles that are posted in order to get a sense of the length and style of the articles accepted. Check with the editor or moderator to make sure it is an appropriate forum for you to use.

It is important to pay particular attention to your audience: is the newsletter, blog, or email listserv primarily targeted to the LGBT community or is it for a wider audience? Is it for parents? Is it for people you know personally, or will it be read by the general public? These are important things to know when creating the message you want to send. Make sure to use the talking points as guidelines and be sure to weave them into your article.

And last, but certainly not least, make sure to have someone else proofread your article.

Sample newsletter article for LGBT audiences:

Even if you're not getting married, you still need to register.

*Not at Macy's. Not at Crate and Barrel. Not at Target.**

What I mean here is....register to *vote*.

You don't have to be married or planning to get married to let your voice be heard in November, and to vote for freedom, equality, and fairness for all by voting NO on Proposition 8.

Voting no is our chance to say, loud and clear, that our California Constitution—the law of our land—guarantees the same freedoms, rights, and protections to everyone. No one should be singled out and treated differently.

What we're asking for is as American as apple pie—the simple, fundamental freedom to be treated equally.

Like freedom of religion and freedom of speech, the freedom to marry is fundamental to our society. No one can tell you which church to attend, or what you can and cannot say. And no one should be able to tell you who you can marry.

Marriage allows couples to express a lifetime commitment to each other, and gives spouses the responsibility for crucial medical decisions in an emergency.

Why would anyone deny same-sex couples that same security, dignity, and respect?

We're not alone. Civil rights groups, religious leaders, and elected officials from throughout California and beyond are all opposing the initiative. Senator Barack Obama and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger don't agree on much, but they both oppose Prop 8.

They've both come to the conclusion that it's **plain wrong** to single out one group of people and exclude them from enjoying the same rights as other citizens. Very simply put, it's about fairness.

You don't have to be getting married soon to fight against this harmful proposition. We are all in this together, so register and to vote for freedom, dignity, and equality. **Vote No on Prop 8.**

Click here to register to vote in California:

http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_vr.htm

** but if you are getting married and you do want to register, you can make an impact by registering at www.equalityforall.com. It's a way to get involved in the campaign, have your friends get involved, and help raise money at the same time! Together we can win this campaign and secure our fundamental right to marry!*

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GENERAL NEWSLETTER, BLOG, OR EMAIL LISTSERV ARTICLES

Submitting an article to be printed in a newsletter or posted to a blog or email group is an effective way to spread the word to **VOTE NO ON PROP 8**.

Where can I place an article?

Many community and social groups have printed and electronic newsletters and websites—everything from school alumni groups, to PTA organizations, parenting groups, to support groups, to athletic teams, to book groups, to church groups. Whether your group has a printed bulletin or a Yahoo group, you can use it as a forum to talk about defeating Prop 8.

How to write an effective article:

Like writing letters to the editor for a newspaper, be sure to do your homework in order to write an effective article. Read the articles that are posted in order to get a sense of the length and style of the articles accepted. Check with the editor or moderator to make sure it is an appropriate forum for you to use.

It is important to pay particular attention to your audience: is the newsletter, blog, or email listserv primarily targeted to the LGBT community or is it for a wider audience? Is it for parents? Is it for people you know personally, or will it be read by the general public? These are important things to know when creating the message you want to send. Make sure to use the talking points as guidelines and be sure to weave them into your article.

And last, but certainly not least, make sure to have someone else proofread your article.

Sample newsletter article for general audiences:

On May 15th, 2008, California became a state that grants equal protection and equal rights to same-sex couples. This was indeed a victory for all citizens, gay and straight, and people across the country are celebrating!

Regardless of how people they feel about marriage itself, many people from across the political spectrum are lining up against Prop 8—the marriage ban.

From the left, the right, and the political center, a lot of folks just don't like the way Prop 8 singles out one group to be treated differently.

After all, our California Constitution—the law of our land—guarantees the same freedoms and rights to everyone. America itself was founded on the principle of equality, and equal protection under the law is as American as apple pie.

Civil rights groups, religious leaders, and elected officials from throughout California and beyond are all opposing the initiative—which would change our Constitution and single out one group of people for unfair treatment.

Senator Barack Obama and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger don't agree on much, but they both oppose Prop 8. They've both come to the conclusion that regardless of how they feel personally, it's just **plain wrong** to single out one group of people and exclude them from enjoying the same rights as other citizens.

There's growing recognition that—like freedom of religion and freedom of speech—the freedom to marry is fundamental to our society. No one can tell you which church to attend, or what you can and cannot say. And no one should be able to tell you who you can marry.

Marriage allows couples to express a lifetime commitment to each other, and gives spouses the responsibility for crucial medical decisions in an emergency.

Why should we deny same-sex couples that same security, dignity, and respect?

At a time when so many political questions seem to divide us, it's inspiring to see so many people united around the fundamental things that matter—equality, freedom, and fairness for all.

Please join me in voting No on Prop 8—it's about fairness.

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