

Creating Change in Denver

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by Drew Wilson, Denver Gay Examiner

On the heels of the presidential inauguration, more than 2,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights advocates have converged on Denver to strategize on how to advance LGBT equality in 2009. A key focus will be on how to achieve gains at the state and local level.

The National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change, organized by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, is the nation's largest convening of LGBT rights activists.

While the November 2008 election produced what many are hoping will be the most LGBT-friendly administration in history, it also produced some setbacks with the passage of anti-LGBT initiatives in states such as Arizona, Arkansas, California and Florida.

Conference participants will hear first-hand accounts and perspectives from statewide LGBT leaders, discuss lessons learned and strategize on how to defeat future attacks against LGBT families. Another session will focus specifically on the battle against Proposition 8 in California, which eliminated the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples there. California LGBT leaders will share their perspectives about the campaign, including myths and facts about communities that voted for and against Prop. 8; larger factors behind the loss; strategies to regain the freedom to marry in California; and ways for people to participate.

There will also be a session focusing on the ensuing grassroots protests led by Join the Impact immediately following the passage of Prop. 8. Task Force Organizing & Training staff who were on the ground in California will conduct a workshop on volunteer recruitment and voter mobilization.

In addition, there will be related sessions on how to advance the freedom to marry nationwide.

The conference, which will take place through Feb. 1, also includes sessions geared toward effecting change at the federal level.

For more information, visit www.CreatingChange.org.