

# Views: Time for Another March

I initiated the first call for the 2000 Millennium March on Washington and then watched as our community ripped each other apart. I quit the organization team for that march and swore I would never again call for a LGBT march.

Watching Elizabeth Birch, then the executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, get caught up in what escalated into a screaming argument with Kerry Lobel, then the director of National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, in my living room, at the beginning of the march organizing, gave me the first indication that I did not want to be caught in the crossfire of major egos.

I went on to happily co-found StopDrLaura.com, and then, to work on marriage equality, through my own, all-volunteer organization, DontAmend.com. For the first time in my political life, I was at peace.

That time is over. We are under siege. Yes, we have *Will & Grace*, and *Queer Eye*, and out performers and visibility.

But still we do not have one civil right on a federal level, and the radical right industry is raising tens of millions and political capital by making us the ultimate scapegoats.

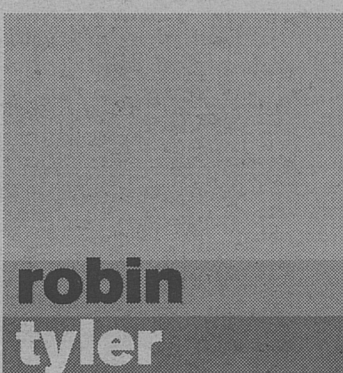
How many state constitutional amendments need to pass before we get angry? How many of our so-called friends in elected office, and other Democrats, need to betray us by supporting marriage segregation, while accepting awards at LGBT dinners, as if civil rights stops at the altar?

Where are the celebrities who publicly ran to our defense during the AIDS crisis? Don't Barbra Streisand and Cher think their gay and lesbian children should have the right to marry? Would they appear at our next march and say so?

What about Madonna? Would Elton John come on the main stage? How about Angelina Jolie?

THIS IS NOT a march just about marriage equality. This needs to be a march - finally - demanding all our civil rights. What good were the 1979, 1987, 1993 and 2000 marches?

The 1979 march brought us together and gave



birth to many organizations and new activists.

During the 1987 march, we did not ask for "help" with the AIDS epidemic. We demanded immediate action. We understood it was a life or death matter. And because of our radical stance, we made it a national issue.

The 1993 march was the first one to be televised. Our own stars came out: Melissa, Martina and Sir Ian. But the march was overwhelmingly supportive of President Bill Clinton (as was I), who then went on to break his commitment to equal employment rights in the military and signed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Then he signed the Defense of Marriage Act, and bragged about that in commercials on rightwing "Christian" radio stations.

The 2000 Millennium March was also used as an organizing tool for the Democratic Party. We were not as angry or demanding as in 1987. We believed them.

This march must be built on an entirely different basis. There must be a litmus test: either support full legal equality for LGBT people, including the equal right to marry, or be prepared to catch hell, regardless of your party affiliation.

We cede control of our lives if we remain silent, in the name of "party unity" or "party loyalty," while the fundamentalists strengthen their chokehold on the political system and our "friends" scapegoat us for their electoral failings and lack of backbone. We did not cause the Democratic Party to lose the last election; they did it all by themselves by failing to stand for anything, while the Republicans

stood for a more arrogant America abroad and heightened bigotry at home.

The truth is we have no federal rights to sacrifice. Not one. We have nothing to lose, and everything to gain, by marching in the year that the next presidential elections are being held. Besides the many anti-gay Republican politicians, it's time for anti-equality politicians in the Democratic Party to be accountable to our community. Period.

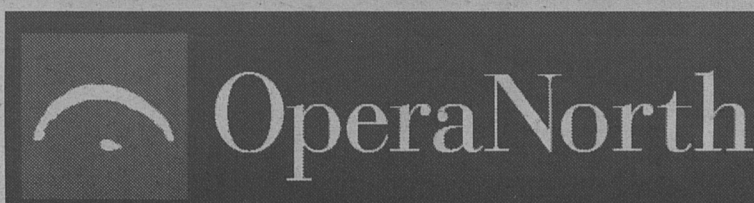
And so, I call on all who believe in full and total civil rights for our community - Matt Foreman, NGLTF, Joe Solomese, HRC, GLAAD, PFLAG, all the "Queers against the Millinuum March on Washington," every LGBT organization, state group, and community center, every LGBT person and all of our non-LGBT allies - all of us, because we are under siege, to put aside all differences, and agree to work together on the 2008 March on Washington.

Yes, as he has said with every grassroots organizing project since he was brought out of the closet, Barney Frank will once again say that this will not work. Well, Barney, we have nothing to lose. Ready or not, here we come.

The great anti-slavery and civil rights activist Frederick Douglass said that "Power concedes nothing without a demand. Never has. Never will." We intend that this march will make DEMANDS on the politicians, regardless of their party affiliations, and that if they oppose legal equality, if they refuse to do the bare minimum of treating LGBT as equal human beings under the law, we will be unflinching in our criticism of them.

The projected date for the march will be in April 2008 in Washington, D.C. For those interested in helping to begin organizing, contact [robin Tyler@dontamend.com](mailto:robin Tyler@dontamend.com).

*Robin Tyler initiated the calls for the 1979 and 2000 Marches on Washington and produced the main stages for the 1979, 1987 and 1993 marches.*



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