

# Ballot Losses in Three States

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ployment and services and by businesses with city contracts, advocates placed a non-binding referendum on the ballot. If passed, it would have urged the City Council to pass such a measure. The referendum received the support of 41% of the voters in Portsmouth, a disappointment for the largest and gayest city in the relatively liberal New Hampshire seacoast area.

The series of defeats leaves activists re-evaluating strategies for next year's expected onslaught of Colorado-style anti-gay ballot measures. The public appears to be buying the right wing strategy of portraying civil rights measures as supporting "special rights" for lesbians and gay men, or turning it into a debate on whether or not people "approve" of homosexuality. While opinion polls consistently indicate that the public disapproves of discrimination, such support rarely survives the well-organized onslaught of distorted and hate-filled anti-gay campaigns.

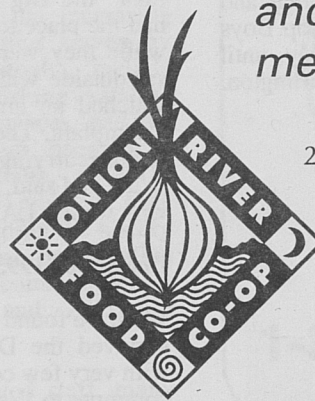
"The initiatives show that we've got a lot of work to do. It's clear that our message is not moving the public," said Gregory King of the Human Rights Campaign Fund. National organizations and leaders are increasingly concerned that possible losses in a series of high-profile statewide votes next year would significantly hamper the effort to enact national and local civil rights measures. Citing the rise in anti-gay violence in Oregon and Colorado, many fear that these campaigns will create an even more hostile social environment for lesbians and gay men.

These elections will drain millions of dollars and demand an incredible expenditure of time and energy from the lesbian and gay communities across the country. Among the states likely to hold votes next year are Arizona, Colorado (again), Florida, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Oregon (again), and Washington state. In addition, voters in Kentucky may vote on a measure to reinstate the state sodomy law recently struck down by the courts, and California voters may face a constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage. ▼

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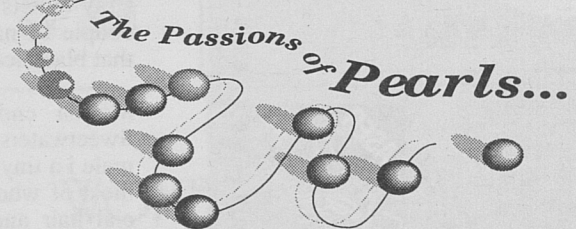
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| <b>Friday, Dec. 3</b> | <b>Women's Dance</b>   | \$6.00 5-9 p.m.                                   |
| <b>Wed., Dec. 8</b>   | <b>Country &amp; Western</b>   | Details-Dec. 1                                    |
| <b>Sun., Dec. 12</b>  | <b>Buffet Brunch</b>   | 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.                                   |
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