

Call for a Pro-LGBT Picket of the White House

6 PM, Saturday, Oct. 10th

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
On the north side of the White House



Bigot Rick Warren yucks it up
with President Obama.

Many of us watched in disgust this past January as the homophobic Reverend Rick Warren was given an honored place at the inaugural festivities.

It was as if a leader of the White Citizens Council had been invited to the White House.

After indignant complaints to the incoming administration about this homophobic slap in the face, what was our consolation prize? Openly gay Episcopalian Bishop Gene Robinson was invited to speak at a lesser inaugural event, as if "balancing" a bigot with a non-bigot was good enough. Then, for good measure – at the behest of the White House – Robinson wasn't televised (see <http://www.gayliberation.net/opinion/2009/0122chicagod.html>).

This homophobic behavior by the Obama White House has been repeated several times before and since:

- During the South Carolina primary, when his campaign featured rabidly anti-gay Gospel performer Donnie McClurkin at a major rally;
- With the quiet dropping of most pro-gay promises from the Obama website earlier this year – until a firestorm of protest forced them to return much of it;
- With the failure to rescind President Clinton's ban on HIV+ people traveling to the United States, and his ban on granting green cards and citizenship to HIV+ immigrants;
- With the unnecessary administration brief in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), with language worthy of the most vicious anti-gay bigot, making a mockery of his promise to repeal DOMA;
- With the statements by Obama that his "Christian beliefs" make him oppose equal marriage rights, as if the former Constitutional law scholar from the University of Chicago doesn't know anything about separation of church and state. Obama's homophobic statements were of course gleefully quoted to great effect by pro-Prop 8 forces in California;
- With the failure to blunt "Don't Ask Don't Tell" (DADT) by issuing a stop-loss order. Instead, he authorized surrogates to endlessly delay the junking of DADT, thereby breaking his promise to repeal it;

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- While an inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act has been reintroduced into Congress, President Obama has expended virtually no political capital in getting it or any other pro-gay measure passed.

The organizers of the Sunday, October 11th March on Washington have placed almost their entire focus on Congress (which will be out of town) and almost none on the President. Indeed, rather than making demands of the President, the official march website goes out of its way to praise "Obama's Mobile Messaging Team (for) Donating Services To The National Equality March"!

By targeting congressional districts and lobbying Congress in an effort to win legal equality, the organizers' strategy looks suspiciously like a drive to elect and re-elect Democrats in the 2010 bi-elections, rather than make uncompromising **demands** on this President and his Congress.

Their current focus on cajoling Congress and the President to do the right thing ignores a very basic fact – this approach has never won civil rights gains. While LGBT activists fawned over the last Democratic President, Bill Clinton repaid our love by giving us much of the crap bullet-pointed above. Like today, many of those anti-gay measures came while the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress **plus** the Presidency.

By contrast, uncompromising street protests led by ACT-UP and others gave us the Ryan White AIDS Care and the Americans With Disabilities Acts – despite a very reactionary political climate during the first Bush administration. An *era* of such protests – the 1960s – caused the radical change in consciousness among LGBT people which thereby gave birth to our modern LGBT movement.

The last thing we need today is to parrot "yes we can" chants, like we are cheerleading this president and his party. Instead, we must take as our maxim the quote from the great anti-slavery organizer Frederick Douglass: **"Power concedes nothing without a demand. Never has, never will."**

Therefore on October 10th we will be picketing the White House to **demand** that the most powerful politician in the world implement the many reforms that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans community needs. Please join us.

**6 PM — Saturday, October 10th
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
on the north side of the White House**

We also will be marching in the Sunday, October 11th march (meeting location tba). We invite you to join us – just look for the big yellow banner that reads "President Obama – Keep Your #1 Promises! Repeal DOMA, DADT"

**For more information or to endorse this statement,
please email the Gay Liberation Network in Chicago
(LGBTliberation@aol.com) or Queer Liberation in Dallas
(LGBTliberation@gmail.com).**

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