

EQUALITY★ACROSS★AMERICA

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September 22, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

Thank you for honoring Harvey Milk with the Medal of Freedom Award. Harvey was my friend and teacher. In the 30 years since he was assassinated lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people have attained a handful of rights in a handful of states, but we are still second-class citizens.

Your historic election gave us hope that change can happen, and now tens of thousands of LGBT people, along with our straight allies, are taking action to demand it. On October 11 we will march on Washington in support of a single goal: full and equal protection for LGBT people in all matters governed by civil law in all 50 states.

Equal rights are not a "gay" issue. They are about our shared human rights: safety in our schools and jobs, equitable healthcare and housing, and protection for our families, to name a few.

I compare our National Equality March with the Civil Rights March of 1963. Martin Luther King had a dream; we have a dream too. We share Dr. King's belief in the dignity and equality of all peoples, and his commitment to non-violence. And we share his faith that justice will prevail.

We do not expect to achieve our goal overnight. Our struggle for equality has taken many years, and much hard work remains ahead. The nation is preoccupied with economic hardship and war. But you have given us hope that civil rights remain on this nation's agenda. The time is right for us to call on our fellow Americans, our elected leaders, and you to reaffirm our shared commitment to civil rights.

With hope in our hearts, we invite you to join us on the west lawn of the Capitol on October 11th. We ask you to take the microphone and renew our faith that Washington will work with us, and not against us. We urge you to remind the world that we are welcome members of this nation. We invite you to stand with us in pride.

Sincerely,



Cleve Jones
Co-Chair, National Equality March