



# NAACP PRESS RELEASE

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 23, 2009

**Contact:** Leila McDowell  
Richard J. McIntire  
(202) 463-2940 x1021  
rmcintire@naacpnet.org

## NAACP EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE'S CHALLENGE TO PROP. 8, CALLS FOR ITS OVERTURN

*Resolution would put California legislature on record as opposing Prop. 8 and urging California Supreme Court to overturn it*

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People today announced support of measures before the California legislature challenging Proposition 8, which altered the California Constitution to deny same-sex couples the freedom to marry and equal protection under the law.

In a letter to legislative leaders, NAACP national board chair Julian Bond and President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous urged passage of House Resolution 5 and Senate Resolution 7 to put the legislature on record calling for invalidation of Prop. 8 as an improper and dangerous alteration of the California Constitution.

"The NAACP's mission is to help create a society where all Americans have equal protection and opportunity under the law," said President Jealous. "Our Mission Statement calls for the 'equality of rights of all persons.' Prop. 8 strips same-sex couples of a fundamental freedom, as defined by the California State Supreme Court. In so doing, it poses a serious threat to all Americans. Prop. 8 is a discriminatory, unprecedented change to the California Constitution that, if allowed to stand, would undermine the very purpose of a constitution and courts - assuring equal protection and opportunity for all and safeguarding minorities from the tyranny of the majority."

SR 7, sponsored by Equality California (EQCA), will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> and will proceed to the full Senate for a vote shortly thereafter. Its companion bill, HR 5, also sponsored by EQCA, passed the Assembly Judiciary Committee on Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> and is eligible for a vote before the full Assembly as early as today.

The California State Conference of the NAACP filed briefs with the California Supreme Court in the legal challenge against Prop. 8, arguing that the measure drastically alters the equal protection guarantee in California's Constitution and that the rights of a minority cannot be eliminated by a simple majority vote. Several other civil rights organizations, faith leaders, unions and leading corporations also filed briefs urging the invalidation of Prop. 8.

"The NAACP has long opposed any proposal that would alter the federal or state constitutions for the purpose of excluding any groups or individuals from guarantees of equal protection," said Chairman Bond. "We urge the legislature to declare that Proposition 8 did not follow the proper protective process and should be overturned as an invalid alteration that vitiates crucial constitutional safeguards and fundamental American values, threatening civil rights and all vulnerable minorities."

The state Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the case on March 5<sup>th</sup> and could rule as early as June 2009. Founded in 1909, the NAACP--the nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization—is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Its more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

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