

Why Should Queers Care About Immigrants

By now Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals are familiar with the agenda of the Right. Reproductive freedom, affirmative action, queer rights, HIV/AIDS funding, hate crimes and stalking legislation are all targets of the Contract On America. Add to that list attacks on immigrants.

Under the guise of "limiting" illegal immigration, Prop. 187 in California, denies education and health care to illegal immigrants. Prop. 187 and its clones are the harbingers of yet another hate campaign.

Just as the OCA uses stereotypes, ludicrous 'research', scapegoating, lies, hatred and fear against us, anti-immigrant forces are employing these tactics. Don't fall for their lies.

During Measures 9 and 13, homophobes made use of stereotyping to scare people into voting to take our rights away. They played on people's negative perceptions of what a Gay man or a Lesbian is. The attack on immigrants is all about perceptions. People of color, particularly Latina(o) and Asian-Pacific people are being made into 'suspects', because that's who is **perceived** to be an immigrant.

Times are economically tough for a lot of people. In order to deflect blame and gain power for themselves, right-wing politicians and groups scapegoat the most vulnerable members of society. Hitler did it in Germany. The OCA did it in Oregon. Now immigrant-bashers are saying that basic human rights (guaranteed by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution) are somehow 'special rights'.

Homophobic attacks on us included misinformation in the form of 'research' contending that we spread HIV/AIDS and 'scholarly' discussions of fecal matter and our sexual practices. Anti-immigrant bigots draw on claims that immigrants spread TB and other diseases as a reason for passing restrictive legislation (which makes health care inaccessible).

We don't need to imagine being afraid to go to a clinic or doctor for health care because something might be assumed about us; most of us, particularly Gay men, know that feeling. So it's not a mental stretch to imagine the fear of anyone who feels s/he might be refused treatment because of a perception.

Violence is the ultimate weapon of the hate-mongers. The fatal beating of Ethiopian immigrant Mulugeta Seraw in Portland, and the fire-bombing deaths of Hattie Cohens, a Black Lesbian and Brian Mock, a Gay man, have one thing in common: hate.

Racism, like homophobia, is still alive and well in the U.S. Playing on fear and hatred of people of color and Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Gay men, anti-human rights crusaders have tried to divide communities and set us against one another. They can then exploit the discord and use it to roll back **all** human rights efforts and achievements. We owe a debt of gratitude and **support** to those in communities of color(both straight and queer) who have fought against the OCA. Stop immigrant-bashing!