



Archives and Records

Finding Aid

COLLECTION NUMBER: Coll. 23
TITLE: Know Thy Neighbor

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator(s): KnowThyNeighbor, Tom Lang, Aaron Toleos, Alexander Westerhoff
Title: Know Thy Neighbor
Extent: 1/2 Linear Foot
Repository: The History Project, Archives and Records Department

Finding aid prepared for The History Project, Archives and Records Department by Robert Johnston, student in the GSLIS Archives masters degree program at Simmons College, under the supervision of Andrew Elder, Spring 2010.

SUBJECTS TERMS

Subject Names:

Know Thy Neighbor
Tom Lang
Aaron Toleos
Alexander Westerhoff

Subject Topics:

Gay Liberation Movement—Massachusetts –Boston
Gay Couples—Legal Status, Laws, etc—Massachusetts
Marriage—Massachusetts
Same Sex Marriage – Law and Legislation – United States

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Terms of Use/Copyright: Unrestricted, though some items in the collection are copyrighted by individuals and/or organizations outside The History Project.
Contact the History Project for further information:

29 Stanhope Street
Boston, MA 02116
617.266.7733
info@historyproject.org
www.historyproject.org

HISTORICAL NOTE

Thomas Lang and Aaron Toleos founded KnowThyNeighbor.org in 2005. The website published the names and addresses of everyone who signed a VoteOnMarriage.org petition supporting a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage (65,825 signatures were required prior to December 7th, 2005). It also collected affidavits from people who wanted their names removed from the petition because they had changed their minds, were misinformed about what they were signing, had been lied to or believed their signatures had been forged.

Because the signature information is public record, publishing it was considered legal. Some supporters of the proposed amendment felt that KnowThyNeighbor.org was attempting to intimidate signers by publishing their names and addresses on the Internet. Ultimately, VoteOnMarriage.org successfully collected enough signatures for the amendment to be voted on by the Massachusetts General Court, first in January of 2007 (where it passed) and again in June of 2007 (where it failed).

KnowThyNeighbor.org has since branched out into other states where bans on same-sex marriage needed to collect signatures, including Arkansas, Florida, Oregon, and Washington State.

KnowThyNeighbor.org.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists primarily of photocopied affidavits submitted to KnowTheyNeighbor.org by people who wanted their signatures removed from Petition K, The Constitutional Amendment to Define Marriage. The affidavits fall into five categories: forgeries, samples, pro gay marriage, regret & misinformation, and bait & switch. The affidavits were included in a 2006 packet sent out by KnowThyNeighbor.org that also contained a Fox25News Undercover Report from 2005 on DVD, a letter from Senator William Saltonstall to be read at the Judiciary Committee Hearing in which he denounces the proposed amendment and committee testimony from Tom Lang and Aaron Toloos, co-founders and co-directors of KnowThyNeighbor.org.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Series I: KnowTheyNeighbor.org Material (contents of 2006 packet, newspaper articles and stickers)

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box 1

- Folder 1: Packet Information and DVD, 2006
- Folder 2: Affidavits – Forgery
- Folder 3: Affidavits – Samples
- Folder 4: Affidavits – Pro Gay Marriage
- Folder 5: Affidavits – Regret & Misinformation
- Folder 6: Affidavits – Bait & Switch

Folder 7: Judiciary Committee Documents, 2006
Folder 8: Newspaper Articles, 2005-2006
Folder 9: Stickers

Related Materials/See also: Coll.22 – The History Project’s Marriage Collection; Coll.27 – Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry; Coll.33 – Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)