

# The Seattle Times

## 'Question One' looks at Maine's same sex marriage vote

"Question One," a documentary about the referendum on same-sex marriage in Maine, is a fascinating example of politics-as-personal, says Seattle Times movie critic Moira Macdonald. The film gives equal weight to both sides, offering insights into what "the other half" thinks. The film is playing at the Northwest Film Forum.

By Moira Macdonald | May 24, 2012

In May of 2009, the state of Maine legislatively granted same-sex couples the right to marry. Not long after, a referendum known as Question One was placed on the ballot for that year's November election: Voting yes to Question One meant a repeal of the new law; a no vote preserved marriage rights for gay couples. Documentarians Joe Fox and James Nubile ("Passing Poston"), seeing an opportunity to tell a story from both sides, embedded themselves in the Question One campaign, both for and against; bringing cameras to strategy rooms, to volunteers as they doorbelled and to the homes of those central to the campaign, pro or con.

The result is the documentary "Question One," an often fascinating examination of politics-as-personal.

"None of what I do is motivated by hate," insists the head of the Yes on One forces, who as the film progresses seems genuinely troubled by the tone of his campaign. (Against his instincts, the Yes advertising emphasized some divisive scare tactics.) Meanwhile, the No leader tells a cheering crowd that their campaign is about "love, and commitment and protections." And we come to know two women — both mothers, both churchgoers, both caretakers of a seemingly cozy and happy home — who stand on opposite sides of the issue yet seem to have much in common, and wonder what might happen if these two sat down for a pleasant coffee.

But those who wonder what the other half thinks will be intrigued — and infuriated, and potentially inspired — by this fly-on-the-wall film.

On election night, as one side celebrates victory and the other endures a tearful (and painfully close) defeat, it feels like a little bit of history — and a reminder that some battles take time to win.

# the Stranger

## How Marriage Equality Was Steamrolled in Maine

(And How We Can Keep the Same Thing from Happening Here)

by Dominic Holden | May 22, 2012

After years of being content to issue its inane edicts about gay people from the sidelines, the Catholic Church has spent the last four years actively repealing gay marriage rights.

It was a leading force to overturn gay-marriage laws in California in 2008 and Maine in 2009—funneling cash from archdioceses around the country into Maine—and now it is barreling down on Washington State. This movie, which you must watch, contains footage from two documentarians who embedded themselves inside the opposing campaigns in Maine.

The first crucial moment in the film comes halfway through, when Marc Mutty, who manages public affairs for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, expresses his queasiness about being ordered by the church to co-chair the campaign repealing marriage equality. "This has been a fucking son of a bitch. This has been awful. I hate it. I hate it. I hate it," he says. He hates the tactics: attack ads with dildos and sex toys, hammering voters over the head with the threat that gay marriage and gay kissing will be taught in schools, declaring that society will abandon monogamy. So why is Mutty doing it? "We are at the mercy of the bishop. I would not have done it. This was none of my choosing." In other words, the Catho-

lic Church is forcing him to do un-Catholic things. In Washington State, Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain is aggressively leading the charge to repeal marriage rights this fall with Referendum 74 and may be equally willing to force his staff to deploy unscrupulous campaign

tactics. That is, tactics so offensive, even Catholics say they're a "fucking son of a bitch."

Question One's second crucial moment comes at the end, when—spoiler alert!—marriage equality is struck down by Maine voters. The good guys lose, even though they thought they were going to win. Even though they thought, having watched a similar campaign the previous year in California, that they knew

the other team's playbook. You need to watch them cry. You need to feel what losing is like.

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO LOSE THIS NOVEMBER?

No. Of course you don't. This movie will show you just how bad losing sucks and how much you're willing to make phone calls, volunteer, and write checks to dodge that bullet. You don't want to cry in Washington like they did in Maine.



**QUESTION ONE:** This is what a successful anti-gay-marriage ballot initiative looks like.

# The Oregonian

Review by Grant Butler | Thursday, May 17, 2012

“

“**Question One**” President Obama’s endorsement of same-sex marriage earlier this month is just the latest chapter in the ongoing debate over marriage equality, and this documentary offers an even-handed look at the emotions on both sides of the issue. In 2009, Maine’s state legislature approved same-sex marriage, prompting a constitutional ballot battle that ended with voters overturning the right to marry by a significant margin. Filmmakers **Joe Fox** and **James Nubile** follow both gay activists fighting the ballot measure, as well as Christian supporters and ministers who believe that marriage can only be defined as between a man and a woman. The film captures the complex thoughts and concerns of people on both sides of the referendum — no easy task. The filmmakers and one of their subjects, **Darlene Huntress**, will be in attendance. (6 p.m. Saturday; 113 minutes; United States) A

”

StarTribune

# Movie spotlight: 'Question One'

by Colin Covert | May 10, 2012



Gay marriage may well be the civil rights issue of the 21st century and it behooves people on either side of the cultural, societal and political divide not to caricature or demean their ideological adversaries. The value of "Question One" (★★★; unrated), a documentary by Joe Fox and James Nubile, is that it treats the activists in each camp with respect and understanding. There is a large amount of nonsense uttered here, but the filmmakers trust you to recognize it and reject it without their coaching. The film examines Maine's historic 2009 decision to legislatively grant same-sex couples the right to marry, and the "people's veto" referendum that repealed the law seven months later. Revealing interviews show foot soldiers breaking ranks with leaders over questionable campaign tactics, and individuals who feel upset and marginalized because their conception of family is under attack. As Minnesota prepares to consider its own marriage equality amendment in the fall, the issues considered in "Question One" are urgently timely and important. (7 p.m. Mon.-Sat. May 14-19 at Theatres at Mall of America. Co-director Joe Fox will be present at all screenings. \$10, available online through [www.twincitiesfilmfest.org](http://www.twincitiesfilmfest.org).)