

Obama endorses gay marriage push in Washington, Maine

by [Jeff Mapes](#)

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President Barack Obama on Thursday (Oct. 25) endorsed the same-sex marriage referendum on the Washington state ballot and also formally backed a similar measure on the ballot in Maine.

The support from the president - who in May came out in favor of gay marriage - provided a boost for the campaign in favor of Washington's Referendum 74 just as a new poll showed that the race was getting tighter.

The announcement came in a statement issued by Paul Bell, the Washington press secretary for Obama's re-election campaign:

"While the president does not weigh in on every single ballot measure in every state, the president believes in treating everyone fairly and equally, with dignity and respect. Washington's same-sex marriage law would treat all Washington couples equally, and that is why the President supports a vote approving Referendum 74."

Michael Czin, the Obama campaign's Northeast regional press secretary, issued an identical statement on Obama's support for Question 1 in Maine, which asks voters whether marriage certificates should be issued to same-sex couples, according to the Portland Press Herald.

Zach Silk, the campaign manager for the pro-referendum forces in Washington, said Obama's endorsement "puts an extra gust of wind in our sails."

A new poll released Wednesday from Elway Research showed the referendum was just barely ahead, 49 percent to 45 percent. In mid-September, Elway found that the measure was ahead, 52 percent to 40 percent.

In recent weeks, the opposition campaign has begun its own television advertising campaign.

Like Washington, Maryland is also voting on whether to ratify a same-sex marriage law passed by its legislature. In Maryland, the president's voice is heard on a new radio ad in support of the measure. His remarks were taken from an interview he gave in May where he announced that he no longer felt civil unions were sufficient for gay couples who wished to get married.

The president has also opposed a constitutional amendment in Minnesota to ban same-sex marriage. —RNS, *The Oregonian*