



Commissioner Brad Avakian
Bureau of Labor & Industries

Press Release

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Avakian Receives Equality Advocate Award

Basic Rights Oregon recognizes Commissioner's leadership in fighting discrimination

PORTLAND—Basic Rights Oregon (BRO), the state's leading advocacy organization for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community, has honored Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian with their 2012 Equality Advocate Award. Receiving the award at a luncheon with community and business leaders, Avakian thanked BRO not just for the award, but for being an important partner in recent victories for equal rights in Oregon.

"I'm just one oar in the water, pulling against currents that have often pushed against us," Avakian said. "Our successes are a product of the many additional oars digging into the water from BRO, our many friends in the business community, and the committed individuals who row tirelessly toward an Oregon that not only protects the rights of all, but values their contributions and participation as well."

During the landmark 2007 legislative session, then-Senator Avakian championed Senate Bill 2, which established protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing and public accommodations. Avakian was also instrumental in passing House Bill 2007, which established domestic partnership rights that help protect Oregon families from unequal treatment. As Commissioner of Labor and Industries and head of the state's Civil Rights Division, Avakian is now the chief enforcer of the anti-discrimination law he helped to create.

"I appreciate this award, and the recognition of the really important strides we have made in protecting all Oregonians' rights under the law," Avakian continued. "But we should not rest until marriage equality is a reality for all Oregonians. And I look forward to standing strong with you every step of the way until we get there."

Oregonians who believe that their right to be free from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing or public accommodations may have been violated are encouraged to contact the state Civil Rights Division by phone (971-673-0764) or email (crdemail.boli@state.or.us).

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The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.