

Dear Portlander,

As you have probably seen in the media, I have been the target of a nasty smear by a would-be political opponent. I will not dignify the substance of this smear by repeating it – if you read the accounts you will see there is no foundation to it. The reason is simple: it is untrue.

This kind of ugly politicking may be commonplace in other cities and at the national level, but Portland and Oregon largely has been blessedly free of it. It saddens me that it has been introduced here, and I have faith that Portlanders' rejection of it will mean that this incident is an anomaly.

About this attempted smear, here is what I want to say.

I have in the past, and I will in the future, respond to people who reach out to me for help and advice. This is especially true when it comes to young people.

Growing up in Newport and Eugene, Oregon I remember when I was a teenager and I had nobody who I felt I could talk to at a time I desperately needed someone to give me advice and perspective about coming to terms with being gay. I came through it. Not everyone does.

Gay youth suicide rates, homelessness and depression are still too high. And, adequate services have been lacking: Reasons why I co-founded Portland's Q Center, served on the Boards of Cascade AIDS Project, Basic Right Oregon and lobbied the state legislature in support of statewide non-discrimination laws.

I didn't get into public life to allow my instinct to help others to be snuffed out by fear of sleazy misrepresentations or political manipulation. I understand the need for good judgment, and I work very hard to keep within the bounds of propriety -- as I did in this case.

I'm glad that people consider me as a person they could come to for help, understanding and support. I work at it. And I hope that you do too. Local programs needing mentors have long waiting lists.

About my political future: this attempted smear will not deter me from serving Portland in the best way I know how. Soon I will be with sharing with you my future political plans.

With warm regards,

Sam

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