



Equality Pennsylvania

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Statement of Equality Pennsylvania on the Re-introduction of A Marriage Constitutional Amendment: Let's focus on REAL issues!

Harrisburg: Today, Equality Pennsylvania learned that Rep. Daryl Metcalfe has once again chosen to introduce his spite-filled, not to mention completely unnecessary, amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution on marriage.

At a time when Pennsylvanians are facing great uncertainty in their lives due to the economy as well as deep and unprecedented cuts to programs that support their health and welfare, how can any elected official in Harrisburg be serious about an issue that so few in the public count as either a threat or even a concern? Not only has poll after poll shown little interest from the public in talking about marriage at any level, most have shown a significant and growing acceptance of same-sex relationships everywhere.

An April 2011 CNN poll indicated that more than half of all Americans believe that marriages between gay or lesbian couples should be legally valid. With 51 percent of respondents saying that same-sex marriages should be legal. Even those who hold tightly to a faith have recently begun to shift their opinions on the issue of marriage. For example, a March 2011 Public Religion Research Institute poll showed nearly three-quarters of Catholics favor either allowing gay and lesbian people to marry (43%) or allowing them to form civil unions (31%).

Pennsylvanians have similar points of view. An April 2011 poll by North Carolina-based Public Policy Polling found that a plurality of Pennsylvania voters (33%) think gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions and 30% favor full marriage equality. So an overwhelming 63% think gay couples should have all the legal rights that married heterosexual couples do. Those differing (35%) think there should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship. Pluralities of 40% of Democrats and 37% of independents prefer full marriage rather than just civil unions, and even a combined 51% of Republicans and the same proportion of voters over age 65 want some form of domestic partnerships.

We close by pointing to Massachusetts - a state with equal marriage for nearly a decade. The foundations of society have not cracked, nor has civilization crumbled. In fact, they have the lowest divorce rate in America. We call on the Legislature to act on serious issues and to stay away from those that needlessly hurt the lives of citizens all in the name of cheap, political gain.

Equality Pennsylvania is committed to defeating the constitutional amendment and we believe in equal marriage rights for ALL people. Our mission is to be the preeminent LGBT advocacy organization for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and work collaboratively to establish a comprehensive network of individuals and organizations united in securing equal rights for the LGBT community (www.equalitypa.org).