

Freedom to Marry E-Update
Issue #19 | June 7, 2006

* * * Because of travel, speaking engagements, and vacation schedules, Freedom to Marry will be taking a one-month hiatus from issuing our bi-weekly E-Update. We will return with the July 19th issue. Please stay informed through our website or subscribe to our feed for the latest news in the interim. * * *

Contents:

- 1) A Note from Executive Director Evan Wolfson
- 2) Freedom to Marry Welcomes Roey Thorpe
- 3) We bid a fond adieu to Noran Camp, Rodney McKenzie, and Pedro Julio Serrano
- 4) Soulforce buys billboards in Senator Frist's hometown
- 5) APA denounces anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment

1) A Note from Evan Wolfson

Much has been said lately about right-wing groups such as Focus on the Family (and the Republican Party) once again rolling out their anti-gay so-called "Marriage Protection Amendment," which seeks to enshrine discrimination into our nation's Constitution. While our opponents' attack on a vulnerable minority to divide voters and stir up their base during a critical election year is heinous, the response from our side (including much of the Democratic Party and Republican moderates) is nowhere near strong or authentic enough.

While it is true that our nation has many pressing concerns, too many on our side cling to the argument that the crucial national conversation about ending discrimination in marriage is a distraction from other "more important" matters. Not only do they miss the opportunity to make the case for ending marriage discrimination and thereby persuade the reachable-but-not-yet-reached, they send an additional insult to the couples around the country who consider their lives, and those of their children and loved ones, to be very important indeed.

Read the rest of Evan's Note on our website.

-- Evan Wolfson

Follow developments in the movement for marriage equality on our website (www.freedomtomarry.org), and in future issues of Freedom to Marry's bi-monthly E-Update.

LINKS:

* Returning to the well - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4442>

2) Freedom to Marry Welcomes Roey Thorpe

Respected movement leader is Freedom to Marry's new Program Director

Freedom to Marry is thrilled to announce that Roey Thorpe, currently executive
Page 1

eupdate19_text

director of Basic Rights Oregon, will be coming onboard as our next program director, succeeding Rodney McKenzie, who will be doing marriage field organizing in California. With a wonderful mix of experience, temperament, stature, leadership and management skills, and vision, Roey will be an invaluable asset to our team and to our work with state and national organizations and allies.

LINKS:

* Basic Rights Oregon - <http://www.basicrights.org/>

* Our press release announcing Roey - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4389>

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3) We bid a fond adieu to Noran Camp, Rodney McKenzie, and Pedro Julio Serrano

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After 3 years here building our organization, Noran is taking on the roll of Counsel to the Committee on Standards and Ethics of the New York City Council. Rodney is returning to his first love, grassroots organizing, in California. He'll be a key partner in our work to win marriage there. We are also sad to say goodbye to Pedro Julio, though he'll still be nearby at the Task Force.

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4) Soul force buys billboards in Senator Frist's hometown

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Soul force, the organization founded to end religion-based discrimination of gays and lesbians, is placing sixteen billboard posters in and around Bill Frist's hometown of Nashville, Tennessee to call attention to Republican pandering to the so-called religious right.

LINK:

* Soul force's press release - <http://www.soulforce.org/article/797>

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5) APA denounces anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment

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Because the American Psychological Association (APA) has documented that gay and lesbian couples form warm and loving relationships and share the same need and desire for structure and support as any other family; and because they also have noted that gay and lesbian parents are as fit and loving, and that their kids deserve the same protections as any others, the APA has been a strong supporter of the freedom to marry.

They have recently come out again to voice their support for ending discrimination in marriage, to strongly oppose the attempt to deny same-sex couples the right to civil marriage and to again express the need to fully recognize the parental rights of lesbians and gay men. The APA has an official policy adopted by the Council of Representatives that affirms APA's opposition to policies that deny same-sex couples

Legal access to civil marriage.

LINK:

* APA's policy on marriage - <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/policy/marriage.html>

* The APA is asking their members to take action. - <http://capwiz.com/apapolicy/callalert/index.tt?alertid=8817246&type=C0>

GET ENGAGED: Freedom to Marry has two jobs available

- * Administration and Development Associate
- * Executive Assistant

These exciting positions are based in our New York City office. Read the full job descriptions on our website.

Speaking the Language of Marriage

The so-called Federal Marriage Amendment to ban same-sex unions provides all of us, gay and non-gay, with an opportunity to make the case for ending the exclusion of lesbian and gay couples from marriage. Now is not the time to engage in punditry about the motivations behind the attack. Instead, focus on telling our stories, laying out the facts, and describing the real hardships faced by the thousands of couples and families across America.

Marriage discrimination harms children. Study after study has shown that children of lesbian or gay parents are as well-adjusted as those of non-gay parents. All children deserve the right to insurance coverage, social security, emergency care and inheritance rights no matter who their parents are. All families benefit from the intangible reassurance that comes from knowing that your family is safe and secure.

QUOTE:

"I've been warned to skip some topics like: Newt Gingrich's first wife. Bob Dole's first wife. Phil Gramm's first wife. Dick Armeys first wife. Rush Limbaugh's first wife. Rush Limbaugh's second wife. Rush Limbaugh's third wife."

- Al Franken, White House Correspondents Association Dinner, 1996, the year Congress passed the anti-gay so-called "Defense of Marriage Act"

