

Freedom to Marry E-Update
Issue #23 | August 30, 2006

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1) A Note from Evan Wolfson

Dear friends –

I spent a chunk of August in the Golden State, working with our colleagues at the Equality California Institute on an ambitious new initiative to "move the needle" on public opinion about gay people and our freedom to marry. The CA Equality Project will be an affirmative, sustained, and integrated grassroots, media, and public education campaign that for the first time in our movement's history will be truly to scale, and conducted over a long enough period of time to engage non-gay people with the information they need and deserve: who gay people are, and why marriage matters. The Project will not only stimulate and shape conversations with Californians, but will give our movement lessons and models to be shared around the country for the work underway and ahead in other states. And we're going to do it on our terms – no more too little, too late, and no more just playing defense.

Why now, and why California?

READ THE REST OF EVAN'S NOTE HERE:
<http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4756>

To stay on top of developments in California, and find out how you can be part of the Equality Project as it unfolds, please visit Equality California's website HERE:
<http://www.eqca.org>.

2) "Todos Somos Familia"

Organizers are pulling together Latino leaders, organizations, and elected officials for a "National Latino Congress." Conveners seek to establish a long-term Latino agenda and action plan, educate and train a wide range of Latino community leaders, elected officials and activists on critical issues, and mobilize Latino community leaders, with a special emphasis on establishing opportunities for new and young leaders.

Our partners at Bienestar, Lambda Legal, Equality California, and the Latino Coalition for Justice LA (a coalition of community leaders) are organizing and sponsoring a groundbreaking workshop at the Latino Congress entitled, "Todos Somos Familia (We Are All Family): Civil Rights and the Latino/a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Community," on Wednesday, September 6 from 10am to noon. Freedom to Marry is proud to have signed on as an endorser of this important conference.

LINK:

- * Bienestar - <http://www.bienestar.org/>
- * Lambda Legal - <http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/index.html>
- * Equality California - <http://www.eqca.org/site/apps/nl/newsletter2.asp?c=9oI NKWMC&b=40337>
- * Latino Coalition for Justice LA - <http://www.latinjustice.org/about.htm>
- * National Latino Congress -

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3) Sharing Our Stories

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Martini que Haller and Brittany Boswell, a librarian and a grad student respectively, have been together for two years. Domestic partners since July 2005, their exclusion from marriage continues to affect their sense of security in ways both tangible and intangible. In order to secure medical power of attorney, the couple had to pay \$500. They hope to change their names this month to reflect their commitment. The cost: \$300. As Martini que put it, "So far we will spend \$800 for two rights, when my best friend, who just got married, paid her license fee [\$15] and got over 1,000 rights."

LINKS:

- * Sharing Our Stories - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3612>
- * Share your story - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=2043>

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4) Freedom to Marry Welcomes Two New Voices of Equality

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Named by Essence magazine as one of the 50 most inspiring African Americans, Rev. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson is the author of the 2004 NAACP Image Award winner for outstanding nonfiction literary work, *Why I Love Black Women* and the national best-seller *Open Mike: Reflections on Philosophy, Race, Sex, Culture and Religion*. He is the author of eleven books and is the Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Religious Studies and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

LINK:

- * Rev. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4745>

Philanthropist James C. Hormel is a long-time leader and benefactor in our movement. He served as a member of the 1996 U.S. delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and the boards of directors of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the American Foundation for AIDS Research. He was appointed United States Ambassador to Luxembourg by President Bill Clinton in 1999.

LINK:

* James C. Hormel - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4746>

5) Welcome Kiyana Horton!

Freedom to Marry welcomes Kiyana Horton as our new Executive Assistant!

LINK:

* Kiyana Horton - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4737>

QUOTE:

"The lessons of the civil rights movement of yesterday, and the ongoing civil rights movement of today, is that sometimes the simplest of ordinary acts – taking a seat on a bus or a lunch counter, registering to vote, applying for a marriage license – can have extraordinary consequences. They can change the way we act and think. They can change our world."

– NAACP Chair and civil rights leader Julian Bond in The Roanoke Times August 18, 2006

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST:

Freedom to Marry is always eager to highlight the important work of our partners in the movement for the freedom to marry.

Send us any marriage-related news you have to share. We'll make sure it gets in our E-Update and is shared with thousands of readers across the country!

You are also welcome to take any of the information you find here for your own newsletter or website to share with your co-workers, friends, and community.

Our updates are yours! Feel free to use and share them!

Do you want the latest marriage equality news from Freedom to Marry in your news feed? Get it here: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3619>

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Lambda Legal, National Black Justice Coalition, Asian Equality, National Latina/o Coalition for Justice, and Freedom to Marry have teamed up to spearhead a campaign featuring a diverse array of people of color depicting the wide-ranging support marriage equality has across the country. To view the banner ad and mini poster, visit Lambda Legal.

GET ENGAGED: Write to friends and family and help them understand why marriage matters to you

There are many ways you can get involved by helping win and defend marriage equality nationwide.

To read a sample letter you can write and send to family and friends, visit: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=3171&view=page=280>

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Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry, by Evan Wolfson

For more information about this great resource, visit: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3470>

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* Sign the Marriage Resolution:

"Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual choice, RESOLVED, the State should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities and commitment of civil marriage."

To add your name to the long and distinguished list of supporters of Civil Marriage in America, visit: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3508>

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Sign our Religious Endorsement:

Endorsements are only accepted from ordained clergy, professional religious educators, theologians, and staff of religious institutions.

To sign, visit: http://www.freedomtomarry.org/religious_institute.asp

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SIGN-UP:

If you received this E-Update from a friend or family member and find it a useful resource on marriage equality, sign-up on the Freedom to Marry website to get E-Updates, visit: http://www.freedomtomarry.org/e_update.asp

Pass it on!

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Let us know what's going on in your community to advance the cause. Email the editor at editor1@freedomtomarry.org.