

Freedom to Marry E-Update
Issue #30 | January 31, 2007

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1) A Note from Evan Wolfson

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Dear friends -

Freedom to Marry Week, February 11-17, is fast approaching - and now's the time to figure out how you are going to be part of this year's 10th anniversary constellation of actions and events around the country. Check our website for resources, and ways you can use the week to reach out to people and help move them on marriage.

And make no mistake: the more we talk with people and explain why marriage matters, the more they are moving. Consider two recent examples from the non-gay press:

The Hartford Courant, a newspaper that endorsed George W. Bush in 2004, published an editorial honing in on what our progress has made the new line of engagement among the open-minded - marriage rather than civil union. Picking up on our case for ending discrimination in marriage, not simply repackaging it with other or lesser status:

"Mark Twain famously illustrated the difference between the right word and the almost right word by using as an example the difference between 'lightning' and 'lightning bug.'... It is folly to deny couples who embark on a permanent commitment the right to legitimate recognition. What's in a word? For those who want to marry and can't, plenty."

Hats off to our friends at Love Makes A Family in Connecticut for moving opinion-leaders past civil union to marriage, with their strong and clear stand.

The Los Angeles Times believes Gov. Schwarzenegger can change his mind, think anew. Gay or non-gay, if we are to move people like him, we need to be out there, making the case individually and together, with patience and persistence. Freedom to Marry Week is a great time to add your voice - and then, of course, every week needs to be Freedom to Marry Week, until we've won all Americans the freedom to marry nationwide.

LINKS:

* Freedom to Marry Week - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3605>

* The Hartford Courant editorial - <http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/editorials/hc-marriage.artjan21,0,5237550.story?>

coll=hc-headlines-editorials

* Marriage Equality Moves Forward - http://www.tompaine.com/articles/2006/03/29/marriage_equality_moves_forward.php

* Love Makes a Family - <http://www.lmfct.org/site/PageServer?pagename=home>

* The Los Angeles Times editorial - <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-ed-gaymarriage3jan03,1,5485885.story>

* "Majority of freshmen view gay marriage as OK" - <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-freshmen19jan19,0,6657121.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

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## 2) 11 States Introducing Marriage Legislation In 2007

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State organizations, pro-marriage legislators, and allies are hard at work across the country fighting in state legislatures to end couples' exclusion from marriage . A record-setting 11 states are introducing marriage legislation in their 2007 sessions: California, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Washington. The legislation would eliminate the different-sex restriction on marriage, and two governors so far have already promised to sign the bills into law: Jon Corzine of New Jersey and Eliot Spitzer of New York.

LINKS:

* California - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3522>

* Connecticut - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3524>

* New York - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3550>

* New Jersey - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3548>

* Illinois - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3531>

* New Mexico - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3549>

* Oregon - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3555>

* Vermont - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3563>

* New Hampshire - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3547>

* Rhode Island - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3557>

* Washington - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3565>

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## 3) Religious Communities Show Support For Shared Values of Equality

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Because we all share the same values of love, commitment, inclusion, justice, and compassion, religious communities continue to join us in the fight for marriage equality. Just last week under the leadership of Equality Maryland, 245 Maryland clergy from eleven denominations gathered at the state capitol in Annapolis to show opposition for an anti-gay constitutional amendment and give support for full civil marriage rights for same-sex couples.

To kick off Freedom to Marry Week, another religious community, Maranatha: Riversiders for LGBT Concerns, located in New York, is sponsoring a forum to discuss why marriage equality is so important to the religious community. Guest panelists include leading marriage equality figures Monique George (Empire State Pride Agenda), Cathy Marino-Thomas (Marriage Equality NY), Tom Henning (Maranatha Riversider), and Reverend Kiyana Horton (In the Life Ministries of Bronx, NY and Saku Healing Arts Center). For more information, visit the Freedom to Marry website and join us for this great event.

LINKS:

- * Maranatha - <http://www.theriversidechurchny.org/getinvolved/?maranatha>
- * Reverend Kiyana Horton - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4737>

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4) Freedom to Marry Welcomes New Steering Committee Member

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Rev. Dr. Ignacio Castuera currently serves at Trinity United Methodist Church in Pomona, California, and also as the first National Chaplain for Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Previously, he spent over 11 years at Hollywood United Methodist, transforming the church into a center of the growing movement aimed at creating a positive religious response to the AIDS pandemic.

As with many non-gay allies in our movement for marriage equality, Rev. Castuera recognizes that he too has a stake in this struggle for equality. He has worked both personally and professionally to end discrimination on many fronts. By bringing his leadership to Freedom to Marry, he continues a lifetime of advocacy for equal rights for all. Beyond his professional duties, Ignacio is the proud father of three daughters and one son, ranging in age from 11 to 32, and loves to read, sing, and play tennis.

LINK:

- * Rev. Dr. Ignacio Castuera - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=1388>

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5) Freedom to Marry Week Mini-Grants Help Local Groups Engage Communities

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This year, in honor of the 10th Annual Observance of Freedom to Marry Week, Program Director Roey Thorpe created a short-term mini-grant program to support the efforts local groups to make the case for marriage equality. So far the mini-grant program

has been a smashing success, supporting events, actions and resources to engage the public in the growing national conversation about ending the exclusion of same sex couples from marriage.

So far 12 gay and non-gay groups from Ferndale, Michigan, to Tulsa, Oklahoma, have been approved for targeted, limited funds to support creative programs highlighting Freedom to Marry week. Here are the recipients of this year's mini-grants and what they plan to do:

- Affirmations, Ferndale, MI: Banners and materials for a variety of pro-marriage events
- Atticus Circle, Austin, TX: Marriage counter action, press conference, celebration
- Equal Rights WA, Seattle, WA: 5,000 marriage equality coasters in LGBT bars and clubs to drive people to website and activities
- Equality Maryland, Annapolis and throughout MD: Create durable pro-marriage equality signs for various events
- Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY: Hold a campus film night on why marriage equality is so important
- Joplin Lesbian and Gay Center, Joplin, MO: Community forum on marriage equality
- Marriage Equality RI, Providence, RI: Rally for marriage equality at Rhode Island State House
- Marriage Equality USA, San Francisco, CA: Story quilt supplies and programs
- Oklahomans for Equality, Tulsa, OK: Marriage counter action and reception
- Southern Colorado Equality Alliance, Pueblo, CO: Marriage counter action and rally
- Spectrum, Marin County, CA: Marriage counter action plus celebration
- Wyoming Equality, Laramie, WY: Event to raise awareness and money about a bill that would refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states

Roey Thorpe says, "What's a 'marriage counter action'? It's when gay and lesbian couples go to the counter at the clerk's office to apply for a marriage license. If and when turned away, they use the opportunity to explain how being denied the freedom to marry hurts them and their families."

Link:

* Roey Thorpe - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4546>

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6) Freedom to Marry Welcomes New Writer/Researcher Megan Kinninger

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Freedom to Marry welcomes Megan Kinninger as our new Writer/Researcher. She has already taken on our E-Update! Heather's over the moon about that, and we're all very happy to have her on board. Read Megan's full bio [HERE](#).

Link:

* Megan Kinninger - <http://www.bluejersey.com/thinkequal/index.html>

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7) Sundance Film Festival Award Won By Film About Domestic Partner Benefits

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Freeheld, a documentary chronicling New Jersey Police Lieutenant Laurel Hester's struggle to transfer her pension to her domestic partner, Stacie Andree, was awarded a Special Jury Prize at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Directed by Cynthia Wade and produced by Vanessa Roth, Freeheld was the only short documentary to receive a Special Jury Prize at this year's festival.

Link:

Freeheld - <http://www.freeheld.com/>

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QUOTE:

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"It is an axiom of nonviolent action and democracy that when any group struggles properly and justly to achieve its own rights, it enlarges the rights of all."

-- Martin Luther King, Jr., Address to the American Jewish Congress, May 20, 1965

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OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST:

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Most visited pages last week:

- Thinking Anew - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4804>
- All Together Now: A Blueprint for the Movement - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=1002>
- Sharing Our Stories - <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=4717>

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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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Listen to Why Marriage Matters: The Fight to Win the Freedom to Marry in New York and Nationwide

In a lecture delivered September 20th at the Yale Club of New York, Evan Wolfson analyzes the NY high court ruling in which the court refused to end state-wide discrimination in marriage, and discussed how to move forward on marriage in New York. Includes Q&A.

Subscribe to our podcast here: <http://feeds.feedburner.com/FreedomToMarryPodcast>

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

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