

Freedom to Marry E-Update  
Issue #31 | February 14, 2007

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1) A Note from Evan Wolfson

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The Freedom to Marry office is filled with glowing smiles, pure elation, and sighs of relief as our biggest week of the year, Freedom to Marry Week, has been a stunning success thus far. Throughout the country, people are seizing this opportunity to engage the public in the conversation about the need for marriage equality.

On Monday, Freedom to Marry Day, our staff hosted an extraordinary event celebrating both the 10th anniversary of Freedom to Marry Day and my 50th birthday. I was very honored by the hundreds of supporters, friends, and family who attended, and was deeply inspired by those who offered their words of reminiscence and encouragement. Thank you to Governor Eliot Spitzer for his letter, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn for sending a City Council Proclamation, a letter from Senator Russ Feingold, and both Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart offering moving speeches about the history of the fight for marriage equality.

As I reach you on valentine's day, a day we celebrate love, I feel overwhelmingly surrounded by love and support especially following such an exceptional event. I look forward to the day when we can all have the choice to show our love and commitment through marriage.

-Evan wolfson

Links:

- \*Letter from Governor Eliot Spitzer:  
[http://www.freedomtomarry.org/images/photos/01-04\\_2007/SpitzerLetter.pdf](http://www.freedomtomarry.org/images/photos/01-04_2007/SpitzerLetter.pdf)
- \*City Council Proclamation: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=5418>
- \*Evan's note and remarks from Freedom to Marry Day:  
<http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=5419>

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2) Freedom to Marry Week Press Coverage and Events Reach New Heights

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From small towns to big cities, people across the country are waking up to read  
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about Freedom to Marry week in their newspaper or on their favorite websites. Events are inundating the public from rallies and marriage counter actions to book releases and lobby days, increasing awareness of the inequality in marriage and everyone's need to fight for change. Congratulations to groups around the country for their successful events. To view this week's events, please visit our website, and to see how widespread the press coverage is, start with these articles:

Links:

\*Freedom to Marry Week Events: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3717>

\*Mombian: Freedom to Marry Week Blog Carnival: <http://mombian.com/>

\*DCist: State of the Same-Sex Union:  
[http://www.dcist.com/archives/2007/02/12/state\\_of\\_the\\_sa.php](http://www.dcist.com/archives/2007/02/12/state_of_the_sa.php)

\*365Gay: Calif. Clerk's Gay Marriage Protest Spreads:  
<http://www.365gay.com/Newscon07/02/021207clerks.htm>

\*San Francisco Chronicle County clerks vow same-sex support:  
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/02/12/BAGOE034A01.DTL&hw=count+y+clerks&sn=001&sc=1000>

\*Sacramento Bee: Clerk protests gay marriage ban:  
<http://www.sacbee.com/257/story/117532.html>

\*Equality Maine: Maine Marriage Video Announcement:  
[http://mainelgpa.advocateoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC=%7b562BFC0C-47E8-4D92-8D9C-83E10E29947F%7d](http://mainelgpa.advocateoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7b562BFC0C-47E8-4D92-8D9C-83E10E29947F%7d)

\*PageOneQ: Marriage battle heats up in Connecticut; Bill extending marriage to be introduced: <http://pageoneq.com/news/2006/cu020907.html>

\*The Patriot-News: Church promotes rights for gay couples:  
<http://www.pennlive.com/news/patriotnews/index.ssf?/base/news/117115983279320.xml&coll=1>

\*The Minnesota Daily: The right to marry: who is really at risk?:  
<http://www.mndaily.com/articles/2007/02/09/70699>

\*Press & Sun-Bulletin: Today begins Freedom to Marry Week:  
<http://www.pressconnects.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070211/OPINION/702110318/1005/OPINION>

\*The Hartford Courant: A Grandmother Speaks Out In Favor Of Gay Marriage:  
<http://www.courant.com/features/lifestyle/hc-susan0211.artfeb11,0,6164109.column?coll=hc-utility-features-life>

\*Blue Oregon: Freedom to Marry Week:  
[http://www.blueoregon.com/2007/02/freedom\\_to\\_marr.html](http://www.blueoregon.com/2007/02/freedom_to_marr.html)

\*Sun Post: The rights stuff: <http://sunpost.net/content/view/347/1/>

\*Modesto Bee: Marriage about rights, same sex couples say:  
<http://www.modbee.com/local/story/13285308p-13916818c.html>

\*The Reporter: I did: [http://www.thereporter.com/horizons/ci\\_5206974](http://www.thereporter.com/horizons/ci_5206974)

\*Relish Now: Marry week intended to highlight inequality faced by gays:  
[http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ/MGArticle/WSJ\\_RelishArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149193061253&path=!entertainment!general!&s=1037645508970](http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ/MGArticle/WSJ_RelishArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149193061253&path=!entertainment!general!&s=1037645508970)

\*OutSmart: The marrying men:

http://www.outsmartmagazine.com/cms-this\_issue/200702--The+Marrying+Men.html?PHPSESS ID=8ed51b2c2e3e374d441463c99a489ed6

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3) Evan Wolfson on MSNBC

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Evan Wolfson debates the Family Research Council on MSNBC News Live regarding a proposed initiative to bar non-procreative couples from marrying, just like same-sex couples in states that deny them the freedom to marry.

Links:

\*Evan Wolfson on MSNBC: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwppcvPmnZw>

\*Washington State Initiative 957: <http://www.wa-doma.org/Initiative.aspx>

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4) Retired NBA Player Comes Out and Stresses the Importance of Marriage Equality

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On Sunday, retired NBA player John Amaechi appeared on ESPN's show "Outside the Lines" and announced he is gay. Amaechi is the first NBA player, retired or active, to come out. Amaechi worked with a broad coalition of our partner organizations (GLAAD, HRC, NBJC) to guide him through the coming out process and he is eager to be involved in the ongoing work toward achieving gay rights, including marriage equality. In his newly released autobiography, "Man in the Middle," Amaechi directly addresses the struggle for marriage equality: "Political conservatives tend to define gay people as 'immoral,' 'perverted,' and 'promiscuous,' yet they deny them the one institution that to them represents the opposite. It's a handy catch-22 with which to bind a whole group of people to second-class citizenship."

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5) Panel on Marriage Equality Educates Public

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On Sunday, February 11th, Freedom to Marry Week kicked off in New York City with a panel on marriage equality hosted by Maranatha Riversiders for LGBT Concerns at the historic Riverside Church. The event was a huge success with standing-room-only attendance. Freedom to Marry's very own Reverend Kiyana Horton sat on the panel along with partners from NY's Empire State Pride Agenda, Lambda Legal, and others.

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Quote:

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"The reality, however, is that marriage equality is one of the great civil rights struggles of our time&hellip; Like other great civil rights campaigns, this fight will require fortitude. We won't win this one without some nasty fights, anxiety that we may lose friends and even wholesale set backs." -David Mixner, author, political strategist, civil rights activist and public affairs advisor

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Other Points of Interest:  
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Freedom to Marry Day Event A Success!

Thank you to everyone who made our February 12th fundraising event celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Freedom to Marry Day and Evan's 50th birthday a success! If you would still like to contribute, even if you missed the event, please do! To learn even more about the event, check out Immigration Equality founder Lavi Soloway's blogpost which has more pictures and an excellent event description.

Links:

- \*Event donation: [http://www.freedomtomarry.org/images/eMail\\_Promos/invite.html](http://www.freedomtomarry.org/images/eMail_Promos/invite.html)
  - \*Lavi Soloway's blogpost: <http://lavisoloway.blogspot.com/>
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Photo & Video Contest for Freedom to Marry Week!

Is there a Freedom to Marry Week poster in your community? Did you have a great turnout for your Freedom to Marry Week event? Whatever captures your eye and the spirit of Freedom to Marry Week, record it and sent it to us. The winner will receive \$500 to donate to the local 501(c)(3) marriage equality organization of their choice. For deadlines and more specifics, go online to Freedom to Marry Week 2007 Video & Photo Contest.

Links:

- \*Freedom to Marry Week Photo & Video Contest:  
<http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3712>
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Most visited pages last week:

- Freedom to Marry Week 2007: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3605>
  - About Us: Megan Kinninger: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=2876>
  - Freedom to Marry Week 2007 Events: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/node.asp?id=3717>
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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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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 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](http://www.freedomtomarry.org/document.asp?id=3171&_view=page=280)

