



Equality Ohio Affirms California Supreme Court Decision on Marriage

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Columbus, OH: Historic decision in California is a victory for all Americans who cherish fairness and opportunity.

Today the California Supreme Court declared that "there can be no doubt that extending the designation of marriage to same-sex couples, rather than denying it to all couples, is the equal protection remedy that is most consistent with our state's general legislative policy and preference". Further stating that "limiting the designation of marriage to a union 'between a man and a woman' is unconstitutional [in California] and must be stricken from the statute . . .".

While people in Ohio are unaffected legally by this ruling, Equality Ohio is hopeful that here in our state all citizens will someday have the same opportunity to solidify our families. This victory energizes our own efforts to continue working for fairness and equality for families in Ohio.

"Equality Ohio is thrilled that the California Supreme Court has recognized that all couples deserve the dignity and support that comes with full marriage recognition," said Lynne Bowman, Executive Director for Equality Ohio. "According to a 2008 study released by The Williams Institute (available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/home.html>), nearly 31,000 same-sex couples live in Ohio, with almost 12,000 children being raised by these couples. These loving, committed Ohio families deserve the opportunity to have the same rights and responsibilities that the California Supreme Court has ruled their citizens deserve."

As a result of a ballot initiative in 2004, Ohio's Constitution prohibits the state and its political subdivisions from creating or recognizing a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance or effect of marriage. However, according to a 2006 poll commissioned by Equality Ohio Education Fund, 52% of Ohio voters say that same-sex couples should be able to form civil unions that honor and protect their relationships.

Equality Ohio hopes that seeing couples get married in California will give the fair-minded people of Ohio the opportunity to continue to see that legal recognition of same-sex couples in committed, trusting and loving relationships strengthens our neighborhoods, towns and cities.

"While today's California Supreme Court decision is historic, we already know from several years of marriage equality in Massachusetts that the effect on marriage in that state has been positive, not negative," Bowman concluded.

The California Supreme Court did its job today: to ensure that all Californians are treated fairly and equally under the law according to their state's constitution.

Equality Ohio envisions an Ohio where everyone feels at home. On the web at www.equalityohio.org .

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