An Open Letter to Religious Leaders on Marriage Equality

Religious Endorsement of the Freedom to Marry

"America needs to know that many faith leaders and theologians from diverse religious traditions strongly believe that all people have a God-given right to lead lives which fully express love, mutuality and commitment—including the right to marry.”

-Rabbi Debra W. Haffner

Director of the Religious Institute

You can download the complete “Open Letter” at www.religiousinstitute.org

The beginning of the Declaration of Independence says, All men are created equal. I take those words literally. There is no ‘unless you’re gay.’

-Ron Reagan

As Mankind becomes more liberal, they will be more apt to allow that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the community are equally entitled to the protections of civil government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations of justice and liberality.

-George Washington (1790)
The Constitution of the United States is a treasured safeguard for every person’s basic freedom and for our nation’s unity. Generations of Americans have fought for and respected this charter of freedom. Since the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791, the Constitution has only been amended seventeen times—never to take away rights or equality from any group of Americans.

Now, under fierce pressure from right-wing groups hostile to gay people and opposed to the separation of church and state, some politicians are flirting with a proposed anti-gay amendment that would cement discrimination into the Constitution. The current version circumscribing the law and upholding constitutional protections for all Americans.

There is nothing conservative about this effort to write anti-gay discrimination into the Constitution. For that reason, many conservative voices have spoken out against this political abuse of the Constitution, including Vice-President Dick Cheney, Senators Chuck Hagel and Jon Ensign, columnist George Will, and even former Congressman Bob Barr (author of the 1996 federal law discriminating against gay people’s marriages).

Our nation’s founders wisely made it very difficult to amend the Constitution. Amendments require approval of two-thirds of the Senate and House and three-quarters of the state legislatures. But right-wing groups are mobilizing millions of dollars for a referendum vote, the constitution can be altered. Even when buyer’s remorse ultimately sets in, undoing amendments to a state’s constitution takes time.

Discrimination has no place in government, in marriage or in the Constitution. Politicians who play with fire near our nation’s most precious document are the greatest threat to American families and values. All Americans, gay and non-gay, deserve respect and support for their families and basic freedoms. Government should not be putting obstacles in the path of people seeking to care for their loved ones. And candidates, presidential or otherwise, should be following the law and upholding constitutional protections for all Americans.

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