

GITANJALI DEANE and LISA POLYAK,
et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

FRANK CONAWAY, in his official capacity
as BALTIMORE CITY CIRCUIT COURT
CLERK, *et al.*,

Defendants.

IN THE

CIRCUIT COURT

FOR

BALTIMORE CITY

Case No. 24-C-04-005390

**MEMORANDUM OF AMICI CURIAE
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

The *amici curiae* are twenty-five religious organizations and forty-eight religious leaders from a diverse range of faiths.¹ They support plaintiffs in this action because they believe that plaintiffs, as lesbians and gay men, have the same capacity to love, to form relationships, to commit to one another, and, if they desire, to nurture children, as do heterosexuals. The *amici* urge this Court to end the State of Maryland's discrimination against plaintiffs in denying them the ability to enter into marriages sanctioned by the State.

The *amici* strongly support the careful separation of church and state. The *amici* represent substantial segments of the religious community that support plaintiffs' demand for equal rights to civil marriage, but they do not ask this Court to accept or adopt their approval of the committed relationships of same-sex couples on religious grounds. Rather, the *amici* submit this memorandum to dispel any notion that the religious community speaks with one voice in

¹ The *amici* religious organizations are listed, with brief statements of interest, in Appendix A. The *amici* religious leaders are listed in Appendix B.

support of the State's marriage discrimination against lesbians and gay men. This Court's ruling as a matter of civil rights will not, cannot, and should not decide these issues for any particular religious organization. By steering clear of any religious rationale for or against Maryland's discriminatory statute, the Court will reinforce the proper separation of religious doctrine from civil law.

ARGUMENT

I. MARYLAND LAW NOW OBSERVES A CRITICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATED WITH A CIVIL MARRIAGE AND THE RELIGIOUS RECOGNITION OF MARRIAGE.

Maryland has sometimes struggled to separate fully matters of state from matters of faith. The Maryland marriage statute now recognizes the distinction between the purely civil relationship of marriage recognized and regulated by the State and the religious covenant sanctioned separately by organized faiths.

Article 36 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights, adopted in 1867, contains the state constitutional guarantee of freedom of religious expression. Although in significantly qualified form, religious liberty was assured as a matter of Maryland constitutional law in Article 33 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights adopted in 1776.² Article 36 does not contain (nor did Article 33 contain) an explicit protection against the government establishment of religion, but the Court of Appeals has recognized that the State's governmental powers are limited by the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. *Barghout v. Mayor & City*

² Article 36 (1867) provides, *inter alia*, that "all persons are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty." Article 33 (1776) contained a similar phrase with one dramatic limitation: "[A]ll persons, professing the Christian religion, are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty."

Council, 325 Md. 311, 327-28, 600 A.2d 841, 849 (1992). Maryland’s legal history reflects the fundamental principal of separating civil authority from religious authority.

More than a century ago, the Court of Appeals observed in broad terms that, “previous to the Revolution, the Church of England was established and maintained by the government as a part of the public polity.” *Brayshaw v. Rideout*, 79 Md. 454, 29 A. 515, 516 (1894) (quoting 1702 Act establishing church as a feature of any “well grounded Christian commonwealth[]”). The Court matter-of-factly noted that, “[w]hen independence was declared, it became necessary to readjust the relations between church and state.” *Id.* at 517. This “readjustment” included the Vestry Act of 1798, described by the Court as “such friendly legislation . . . as was thought necessary to preserve and protect [the] rights [of the renamed Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland], and to promote its well-being.” *Id.* Although the Court sought to avoid “those unhappy controversies among members of religious bodies which sometimes come before courts of justice,” *id.* at 516 – declaring “that we have no power to decide any question of ‘doctrine, discipline, or worship,’ and that no one has a right to bring such a question before us,” *id.* – the Court nevertheless did not shy away from “inquir[ing] what powers and rights belong to the register of the parish when a member of the church applies to him for enrollment on the books of the parish,” *id.* at 517. Because that power was deemed “merely mechanical and ministerial,” the Court had “no difficulty” bringing its civil mandamus authority to bear to compel the register to enroll the petitioner as a member of the parish. *Id.* at 518.

In the sphere of marriage, the “readjustment” of church and state relations was still progressing in the mid-twentieth century. It was not until 1964, with the enactment of chapter 406 of the Acts of 1963, that court clerks and their designated deputies were authorized to

perform marriage ceremonies.³ Until then, the only persons “authorized to solemnize marriages in this State” were “any minister of the Gospel or official of a religious order or body authorized by the rules and customs of said order or body to join persons in marriage.” Md. Ann. Code Art. 62, § 4 (1957) (repealed; now codified, as amended, as Md. Fam. Law Code Ann. § 2-406 (2004 Repl. Vol.)). *See also State v. Clay*, 182 Md. 639, 642 (1944) (“In Maryland the marriage institution is treated as sacred and must be by a religious ceremony; such is the public policy of the State, as declared by its Legislature by Statute.”).

If the General Assembly’s aim was to elevate civil marriage – or at least marriage ceremonies – to the higher levels occupied by clergy, the legislation reserving the solemnizing function to clergy seems rather to have had a de-basing effect on some clergy. In the first half of the twentieth century, the legislature found it necessary to try “to curb the marriage racket,” which had produced “so-called ministers of the gospel who were not as ethical as they could have been.” *Clay*, 182 Md. at 642-43. The Court provided a vivid description of the problem:

Some adjoining States from time to time passed marriage statutes in some respects more drastic than those of this State, and many of our county seats, particularly along the northern border, became Gretna Greens. The increase in the number of persons coming into Maryland developed a commercial aspect, and some hotel porters and cab drivers who infested the railroad and bus stations, and so-called ministers of the gospel who were not as ethical as they could have been, developed a thriving business centering in many of our county seats, and particularly Elkton, county seat of Cecil County, on account of its more favorable location, in much undesirable publicity. It was the practice of such ministers to divide their fees with the porter or cab driver who took them the business. If they refused to divide, the ministers were soon out of the wedding business. Elkton is located on one of the country’s most traveled roads, intersected at or near that town by many important roads. The thousands of persons who travel these roads every day are greeted by very conspicuous signs. On all of them in very large letters are the words, ‘Marriage Licenses’ and below in small inconspicuous

³ Marriage ceremonies may now also be performed by judges, as well as court clerks, designated deputy clerks, and religious officials. Md. Fam. Law Code Ann. § 2-406 (2004 Repl. Vol.)

letters, hardly legible from the roads, the word, 'Information.' This in itself is a fraud on the public, not compatible with the ministerial calling, and not practiced by any respectable minister.

* * *

This all brought to many county seats much unpleasant and undesirable notoriety. Ministerial associations passed resolutions against it and made investigations and newspapers inveighed against it, but all without effect.

Id. at 642-44.⁴

Over a period of decades, the General Assembly first prohibited any person authorized to perform wedding ceremonies from giving or offering any inducement to any person for steering potential brides and grooms to the authorized person, then it imposed a 48-hour waiting period between application and issuance of marriage licenses, then it tightened the waiting period provision to permit waivers only where one spouse was a Maryland resident, and then it prohibited all billboards and other signs “intended to aid in the solicitation or performance of marriages.” *Id.* at 644-45. In *Clay*, the Court upheld an arrest made for violation of the billboard law.

Maryland thus has within its jurisprudence not only the general principle that the affairs of state should be separated from matters of religion, but also a specific illustration of the hazards of attempting to mix the two in the context of marriage. For many people, creation of the legal marital relationship coincides with a commitment carrying the blessing of an organized religious body, but the two remain separate. This case deals only with the state-sanctioned legal

⁴ The Court’s description is more remarkable because of the Court’s acknowledgement that “[n]one of this appears in the record.” 182 Md. at 643. The Court deemed it capable of being judicially noticed as one of those ““matters arising in the ordinary course of nature or the general current of human affairs which rest entirely upon acknowledged notoriety for their claims to judicial recognition.”” *Id.* (quoting Bouvier’s Law Dictionary, Rawle’s Third Revision, p. 1734).

relationship, and *amici* fully support keeping that civil status distinct from any religious covenant.

II. MANY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS WELCOME AND SUPPORT SAME-SEX COUPLES IN THEIR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES.

Too often, the deep traditions of religion are invoked selectively as support for the narrow policy objectives of a particular segment of the populace. *Amici* here resist this temptation and have no desire to impose their spiritual beliefs on this Court. They state some of those beliefs here, however, to counter any notion that any segment of the religious community can claim to reserve the civil relationship of marriage for heterosexual couples exclusively on the basis of divine authority.

Amici represent serious and substantial segments of virtually every mainline Christian denomination in Maryland. Many of the individual *amici* are among the one hundred and five Christian clergy in Maryland who have subscribed to a Statement of Equal Access to Marriage. *See* Appendix C. Those clergy “are alarmed by the inflammatory, misleading, and discriminatory rhetoric of some Christian ministers who would have their voice be perceived as speaking for all Christians in advocating for the denial of equal civil rights for gay and lesbian couples in Maryland.” Rejecting “the exploitation of selected verses of the Bible to declare same-gender sexual expression to be per se sinful,” these clergy affirm the belief “that both heterosexual and homosexual relations are capable of being sinful and of being faithful.” They know this because they know “many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people” who are among “the most faithful and dedicated Christians within our communities” and who have struggled to create and sustain the same sort of committed human relationships as heterosexual

couples. These ministers “adhere to a strict separation of church and state,” and they recognize that, if the religious doctrine of some is used to justify discrimination in access to the relationship civil marriage, then the government is not protecting the free exercise of religion by all. The roster of signers of this Statement includes ministers of Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, United Church of Christ, Methodist, American Baptist, and Metropolitan Community Church congregations.

The Religious Society of Friends has been very clear on this subject. The Executive Committee of the American Friends Service Committee Board of Directors, acting at the direction of the full board, approved a “minute” – the Quaker term for a formal communication from a group within the larger Society – setting forth its “support for equal civil marriage rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.” Noting that some advocate civil unions for same-sex couples, while reserving civil marriage for heterosexual couples, the Executive Committee disagreed: “It is our belief that government sanction should be applied equally. All couples should be granted civil union licenses or all should be granted marriage licenses.” Like *amici* here, the AFSC Executive Committee was “careful to distinguish between civil law, in which no single religious view should predominate, and the right of various faith traditions, denominations, and congregations to decide for themselves whether they will perform, support, or recognize [same-sex] marriages.”⁵

Almost ten years ago, in 1996, the Unitarian Universalist Association resolved formally to support equal marriage rights as a matter of “immediate witness” expressly providing that

⁵ See “Minute on Civil Marriage,” available at <http://www.afsc.org/build-peace/equal-marriage.html> (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D).

clergy and congregations may celebrate religious unions of same-sex couples. The Unitarian Universalist General Assembly adopted this position based on “the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and “[b]ecause marriage is held in honor among the blessings of life.” It felt compelled to act even more explicitly than it had in the past because the debate over same-sex marriage “has focused on the objections of certain religious communities” opposed to equal access to marriage. The Unitarian Universalists have more than 1,000 congregations in North America.⁶

In April 2004, the national Executive Council of the United Church of Christ adopted a statement opposing federal and state legislative efforts to reserve marriage only for heterosexual couples. The statement echoed similar resolutions passed at the same national meeting by the Boards of Directors of the four primary ministries of the UCC. The Executive Council grounded its position on the fundamental affirmation that, “as a child of God, every person is endowed with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside. We believe that recognition of the sacred joining of individuals is deserving of serious, faithful discussion by people of faith, taking into consideration the long, complex history of marriage and family life, layered as it is by cultural practices, economic realities, political dynamics, religious history, and biblical interpretation.” This year, the UCC General Synod will debate a resolution specifically

⁶ See “Support of the Right to Marry for Same-Sex Couples, 1996 Resolution of Immediate Witness,” available at <http://www.uua.org/actions/immediate/96same-sex.html> (last viewed June 14, 2005); see also <http://www.uua.org/news/2004/freedomtomarry> (summary of historical UUA actions on marriage equality) (both in Appendix D).

supporting equal rights to marriage. The UCC has 1.3 million members across the country in 6,000 local congregations.⁷

Virtually every mainline Christian denomination now includes a growing internal movement to recognize the opportunity of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, to participate fully on the basis of faith in the life of the denomination. Advocacy of equal rights to join in civil marriage frequently is a central part of those movements. Several of the *amici*, for example, are congregations in the Presbyterian Church (USA) working to bring down that denomination's barriers to the full participation of gays and lesbians as clergy through both the More Light Presbyterians movement and a national organization, That All May Freely Serve, that has a strong chapter based in Baltimore. A similar group, the Alliance of Baptists "supports the rights of all citizens to full marriage equality, and . . . affirm[s] anew that the Alliance will 'create places of refuge and renewal for those who are ignored by the church.'"⁸ The Reconciling Ministries Network is "a national grassroots organization that exists to enable full

⁷ See "United Church of Christ leaders denounce Federal Marriage Amendment; call for action and dialogue on marriage" (April 28, 2004), *available at* <http://www.ucc.org/news/u042804.htm> (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D). The UCC is a decentralized denomination in which individual congregations maintain significant autonomy. The national bodies, such as the Executive Council and the General Synod, adopt positions for consideration by the local congregations.

⁸ Alliance of Baptists Statement on Same Sex Marriage (April 17, 2004), *available at* <http://www.allianceofbaptists.org/sssm-2004.htm> (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D). The Alliance is a national organization of individuals and churches "dedicated to the preservation of historic Baptist principles, freedoms, and traditions," and it currently lists twelve participating congregations in Maryland. In the Statement, the Alliance affirms "that our federal and state constitutions exist to protect the rights of minorities from the tyranny of the majority" and "lament[s] the denigration of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender sisters and brothers in this debate by those who claim to speak for God."

participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of the United Methodist Church, both in policy and practice.”⁹

Just last month the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland adopted a series of four resolutions opposing federal or Maryland constitutional amendments to prohibit same-sex marriages or unions, supporting legislative measures to extend key civil benefits to same-sex couples, opposing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and calling for creation of a task force to study issues of marriage, unions, and civil rights. In a statement accompanying the resolutions, the Episcopal Bishop of Maryland, the Right Rev. Robert W. Ihloff, noted that the Diocese is “keenly supportive of issues of social justice,” based in part on the central call “to ‘respect the dignity of every person.’” Bishop Ihloff stated that “[i]n this Diocese, we acknowledge with thanksgiving gay and lesbian members some of whom are in committed, life-long relationship.”¹⁰ *Amici* do not suggest that the Episcopal Diocese has adopted a unified, doctrinal position in support of plaintiffs’ civil rights claims. Indeed, Bishop Ihloff was careful to note in his statement that “[a]s a Church we have not authorized the blessing of same-sex unions.” Still, these resolutions reflect the dynamic state of thinking in many denominations as people of faith examine how their beliefs guide them in thinking about these significant issues of civil law and religious doctrine.

⁹ See <http://www.rmnetwork.org> (mission statement) (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D).

¹⁰ See “Statement on Resolutions Adopted by the 221st Convention of the Diocese” (May 10, 2005) available at http://www.ang-md.org/press/ihloff_statement_05-10-2005.html (last viewed June 14, 2005). Links to each of the resolutions are available at <http://www.ang-md.org/convention/index.html> (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Resolutions 2005-2 through 2005-5) (all in Appendix D).

Amici and religious organizations supporting the marriage rights of same-sex couples are by no means limited to Christian faith communities. The individual *amici* here include a number of rabbis and other Jewish leaders. At its 1997 General Assembly, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism), the organization of Reform Jewish congregations in the United States, resolved to “[s]upport secular efforts to promote legislation which would provide through civil marriage equal opportunity for gay men and lesbians.” As part of the foundation for this resolution, the UAHC recognized that, “[n]o less that heterosexual couples, gay men or lesbians living in monogamous domestic relationships have demonstrated, like their counterparts, love for one another, compassion for the sick, and grief for the dead.”¹¹ The 1997 resolution also built on a 1996 resolution of the Central Conference of American Rabbis “support[ing] the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage.”¹²

The Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations has strongly “affirms its support for legal recognition of same-sex marriages” and “an end of all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.” That Jewish organization finds particular “solidarity” with gay men and lesbians on this issue “based on our own long historical experience as abused outsiders.” The Committee rejects “the hypocrisy of religiously-based opposition to same-sex marriages,” emphasizing both “the [religious] teachings

¹¹ See “Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian Jewish Couples,” *available at* www.urj.us/dallas/areso/civilmar.html (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D).

¹² See “On Gay and Lesbian Marriage” (March 1996), *available at* <http://www.ccarnet.org> (links to Documents & Positions, then Resolutions, then search for 1996) (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D). The CCAR recognized this “as a matter of civil law, . . . separate from the question of rabbinic officiation at such marriages.

of tolerance and acceptance” and the paramount importance of constitutional principles in deciding the issue as a matter of civil law.¹³

These diverse religious groups are by no means unanimous in their positions of these issues, but a consistent, strong theme is their affirmation of the value and dignity of all people before God and of the potential for all people to form committed, loving partnerships. Although progress toward doctrinal recognition of same-sex unions in these various religious groups varies, there is widespread support for equal access to marriage as a matter of civil right separate from religious recognition of same-sex marriages. The government should not reflect the religious doctrine of any group. By opening civil marriage equally to both heterosexual and lesbian or gay couples, this Court will ensure that civil law neither favors nor disfavors any particular religious viewpoint, and it will leave individual faith communities free to determine for themselves whether or not to add religious sanction to particular unions.

¹³ See “Social Action Resolutions: Same-Sex Marriages” (2005), available at <http://www.csjo.org/pages/socialaction.php#marriages> (last viewed June 14, 2005) (Appendix D).

CONCLUSION

Amici are particularly concerned that the Court not act on the basis that any particular religious group – now or in the past – has condemned same-sex marriage. *Amici* urge this Court to listen to them not because they hope that the Court will embrace their religious views. Rather, *amici* urge that civil marriage in Maryland – separate from any religious recognition of any relationship – must be made equally available to all persons of all sexual orientations.

Respectfully submitted,



Lawrence P. Fletcher-Hill

Gordon, Feinblatt, Rothman,
Hoffberger & Hollander, LLC
The Garrett Building
233 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-576-4254

Attorney for Amici Curiae
Religious Organizations and Leaders

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 14th day of June, 2005, copies of the foregoing memorandum were served by hand delivery to:

Andrew H. Baida, Esquire
Rosenberg Martin Funk Greenberg, LLP
25 South Charles Street, Suite 2115
Baltimore, MD 21201

J. Joseph Curran, Jr., Attorney General
Margaret Ann Nolan, Assistant Attorney General
Steven M. Sullivan, Assistant Attorney General
200 Saint Paul Place, 20th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202


Lawrence P. Fletcher-Hill

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

AMICI CURIAE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Adelphi Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Adelphi, Maryland

On May 12, 1991, Adelphi Friends Meeting adopted a minute concerning Same Gender Marriage that states in part:

“Our understanding of the spirit of Christ as reflected in the Gospels, leads us to affirm one another and our loving responsible relationships. To do so strengthens our community, opens us to the full richness of the diverse loving relationships in our Meeting, and gives the persons in such relationships the support of a loving community.

We accept and appreciate diversity in our community and welcome all who share our search for Truth. Just as marriage between a man and woman may provide nurture to both the couple and the Meeting, committed same-gender relationships may also be a source of spiritual growth. We recognize the Light in all sincere, loving, supportive relationships, which are characterized by growth and in which faith, hope, love and truth abide.”

The American Catholic Church in the United States

National Offices
5595 Rivendell Place
Frederick, MD 21703

The American Catholic Church in the United States (ACCUS) supports the equal rights of all people, whether they be heterosexual or homosexual. All committed partnerships deserve total equal rights. This equality also extends to their dependents.

The Baltimore Ethical Society

309 West Franklin Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The Baltimore Ethical Society is a humanistic religious and educational fellowship that has served families in and around Baltimore for more than 50 years. Our participation as *amicus curiae* in this action is consistent with our commitment to social and economic justice and our desire to work for a more moral, humane, and cheerful future for ourselves and our children.

Believers Covenant Fellowship

P.O. Box 10623

McLean, Virginia 22102

Believers Covenant Fellowship is a non-denominational, Christian, open and affirming congregation incorporated in the State of Maryland and located in McLean, Virginia. We do not believe that the granting of a marriage license or civil union to gay or lesbian couples would in ANY WAY harm or hinder the working of the Church, the State or the traditional family. In fact, we strongly adhere to the principle of separation of church and state, and wholeheartedly believe that our rights as American citizens are based upon the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, NOT upon religious texts of the Bible, the Quran, or any other religious text. Therefore, we do not believe that any religious organization should have the power or the right to enforce its interpretation of religious texts on any other person or group. We especially defend all Americans' protected and respected rights to pursue life, liberty and happiness as they see best for their lives.

Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church

1316 Park Avenue

Baltimore, Maryland 21217

The Session of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church ("BMPA") voted unanimously to join as *amicus curiae* in support of plaintiffs in this action. BMPA seeks to be a fully inclusive church, welcoming all persons to participate in the life of the church. Specific to gay and lesbian persons, BMPA expresses its commitment to equality and inclusion through its status as a More Light church and a covenanting member of That All May Freely Serve: Baltimore.

BMPA believes that the State of Maryland has no compelling interest to restrict marriage to opposite-sex couples, denying committed gay and lesbian couples all of the rights, benefits, and responsibilities of marriage. In support of equality for gay and lesbian persons, BMPA believes that access to such rights and responsibilities encourages long-term committed relationships and provides stability for the families of these committed individuals.

Chesapeake Bay Unitarian Universalist Association of Ministers

Barbara Wells ten Hove, President

The Chesapeake Bay Unitarian Universalist Association of Ministers includes all of the ministers in Unitarian Universalist churches in Maryland as well as those in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. We have all grieved with gay and lesbian members of our churches who have loved and supported one another, often for many years, but who are denied the dignity and the protection of the civil marriage laws in the State of Maryland. Our faith and our churches are firmly committed to the separation of church and to the rights of all people to the equal protection of the state.

Faith Presbyterian Church
5400 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21239

The vision statement of Faith Presbyterian Church states, "We are committed to a circle that is wide and unbroken and declare that all who desire to join with us will be welcomed and respected." Because of this commitment to the worth and dignity of every person, we enjoy an inclusive faith community that benefits from the spiritual gifts and full participation of persons of wide diversity. Amongst our gay and lesbian members are couples that are in committed relationships with life-long intent, and the Session of the church believes that, as a matter of full equality and social justice, they and other same-gender couples should have access to the legality of civil marriage, with all its attendant responsibilities and privileges. We believe that first of all marriage is a civil issue. The choice by a minister or religious community of whether or not to recognize and bless such unions is a separate matter and should not negate the availability to gay and lesbian couples of civil marriage, with all the legal rights and options heterosexual couples have.

The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church
210 West Madison Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, Maryland was founded in 1761 and has a proud tradition of endeavoring to extend the grace of God to all persons. For the past 25 years, First and Franklin Street has worked actively for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in society and the church. The Session of the church regularly authorizes the celebration of Holy Unions between same-gender couples who desire to make their commitment to one another before God. We support full civil marriage rights for same-gender couples.

First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ
6915 York Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ is an "open and affirming" congregation in the United Church of Christ that welcomes all persons to full participation in the life of the congregation regardless of sexual orientation, age, race, national origin, gender, physical or mental abilities. Further it seeks to be a congregation calling for justice by our actions and witness in the world, which includes equal access to marriage for all persons. We actively look forward to the day that all the marriages that are officiated in our congregation are also recognized by the State, including the marriages of same-sex couples. We look forward to the time that all couples, same-sex and non same-sex, have the same privileges, responsibilities and opportunities to provide for their families as their covenanted relationships are recognized equally by the State.

First Unitarian Church of Baltimore

1 W. Hamilton Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The First Unitarian Church of Baltimore is a Welcoming Congregation, supporting the rights and dignity of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. We have seen first hand the hostility and financial risks faced by couples who love one another. We stand with them in seeking the equal protection of the laws of Maryland in support of their relationships and their families.

Govans Presbyterian Church

5828 York Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Govans Presbyterian Church has a long history of welcoming into its membership, and into its ordained leadership, all persons regardless of sexual orientation or any other factor other than a profession of faith. The church has encouraged loving members who cannot, under current Maryland law, marry because they are of the same gender to celebrate “Holy Unions” and thereby profess their covenantal relationship. The clergy of this church have officiated at such services of “Holy Union.” The church joins with other *amici curiae* in urging the Court to rule that marriage should be open to all – on behalf of those of its membership and all others in the larger society who are denied the right of marriage.

Integrity/Baltimore

4 East University Parkway
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Integrity/Baltimore works for the full inclusion of GLBT people in the life of the Episcopal Church and is affiliated with Integrity, which was founded in 1974. As the Episcopal Church has worked towards full inclusion within, it has also taken numerous stands in favor of equality for GLBT people. All our members are people of faith, and many are living in committed relationships but lacking equal citizenship. We support the effort for full citizenship as whole people embodied in this case.

Interfaith Fairness Coalition of Maryland

P.O. Box 13132

Baltimore, Maryland 21203

We are an organization of individuals and associations drawn from many religious persuasions that support efforts to:

- Foster more positive perspectives on homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderness within religious bodies in cooperation with existing gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (g/l/b/t) friendly religious organizations;
- Implement a program of public education and awareness to counter societal oppression of g/l/b/t persons within the state of Maryland; and
- Nurture a robust, broadly based, statewide interfaith coalition that will develop advocates, from within religious bodies, for fair treatment of g/l/b/t persons in Maryland.

Light Street Presbyterian Church

809 Light Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Light Street Presbyterian Church, a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic and the Presbytery of Baltimore, has been a significant presence in Baltimore's historic Federal Hill neighborhood for 150 years. Believing that all human beings are created by God, in the image and likeness of God, the congregation is committed to welcoming all people into full participation in the life of the congregation "regardless of their race, ethnic background, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability." Given the church's commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive congregation, and believing that same-sex couples should have the same marital rights available to any other couple, the Session voted unanimously to join as *amicus curiae* in support of plaintiffs in this action.

The Vestry of Memorial Episcopal Church

1407 Bolton Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Memorial Episcopal Church is a diverse community worshipping God and serving people. Our congregation is dedicated to representing God's expansive love to the world. We welcome and embrace lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) people within the Episcopal Church (USA) and within society-at-large. We feel this is a mandate from the Gospel of Jesus Christ to love every person just as God created them.

The Vestry, Wardens and Clergy of Memorial Episcopal Church believe that the State of Maryland has no compelling interest in restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples, with the result that gay and lesbian couples are denied the privileges, benefits, and responsibilities of marriage. We fully support equal civil rights for the gay and lesbian citizens of Maryland. Such rights include marriage equality for same-sex couples.

National Coalition of American Nuns

Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL, Executive Co-Director
4012 29th Street
Mt. Rainier, Maryland 20712

The National Coalition of American Nuns believes that the State's failure to recognize same-sex marriage is an unambiguous discrimination based on sexual orientation and is politically and morally wrong.

Founded in 1969, the National Coalition of American Nuns is an organization of approximately 500 Roman Catholic religious women across the United States. The organization is dedicated to studying, working and speaking out on issues of human rights and social justice.

New Ways Ministry

Mt. Rainier, Maryland

New Ways Ministry is a national Catholic ministry of justice and reconciliation for lesbian/gay Catholics and the wider Church community. Our offices are in Mt. Rainier, Maryland, and we are incorporated as non-profit organization in Maryland.

Roland Park Presbyterian Church

4801 Roland Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21210

We are an urban congregation that is open, committed, and seeking an ever deeper understanding of Christ our Lord. The Session has voted to join as *amicus curiae* in support of plaintiffs in this action.

St. John United Church (United Methodist/Presbyterian (USA))

10431 Twin Rivers Road
Columbia, Maryland 21044

St John United Church (United Methodist/Presbyterian (USA)) is an inclusive, ecumenical congregation that welcomes all to participate in all aspects of the life of the church, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or economic status. From that tradition, we support full equal civil rights for gay and lesbian citizens of the State of Maryland, including access to marriage for same-sex couples. We believe that same-sex couples deserve the same privileges, benefits and responsibilities of marriage as opposite-sex couples, so as to encourage long-term committed relationships and provide stability for their families.

That All May Freely Serve: Baltimore, Inc.

5400 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland

The Board of That All May Freely Serve: Baltimore, Inc. is composed of seven Presbyterian Churches in the City of Baltimore and Columbia and many individual members of churches throughout The Presbytery of Baltimore. TAMFS:B works for the just full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) people within the Presbyterian Church (USA) and within society-at-large. TAMFS:B exists to challenge all structures that denigrate the dignity and self-worth of LGBT people, and, by extension, undermine the sanctity and validity of same-sex committed relationships. TAMFS:B understands this work to be a mandate derived from the freeing grace and love of God intrinsic to the Christian faith.

TAMFS:B believes that the State of Maryland has no compelling interest in restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples, with the result that gay and lesbian couples are denied the privileges, benefits, and responsibilities of marriage. TAMFS:B fully supports equal civil rights for the gay and lesbian citizens of Maryland. Such rights include marriage equality for same-sex couples.

The Board of Trustees of the Towson Unitarian Universalist Church

1710 Dulaney Valley Road
Lutherville, Maryland 21093

The Board of Trustees of the Towson Unitarian Universalist Church, which is a Welcoming Congregation, wishes to make known its support for full equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, including the right of same-sex couples to marry.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis

333 Dubois Road
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis is a congregation of more than 500 adult members, 200 adult non-members and friends, and 200 youth and children. In 1997, through its democratic process, the congregation voted to “affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person” by becoming a Welcoming Congregation, which means, in part, that we will be inclusive and expressive of the concerns of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender persons at every level of congregational life – in worship, in program, and in social occasions, welcoming not only their presence but the unique gifts and particularities of their lives as well. As a Welcoming Congregation, we are in support of full equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, including the right of same-sex couples to marry.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, Maryland

7246 Cradlerock Way
Columbia, Maryland 21045

As a matter of faith, we Unitarian Universalists have long blessed the sacred unions of all loving and committed couples, regretting that they would not have the benefit of the legal protections of the state. We continue to affirm the right of all loving couples to the full benefits of civil marriage, regardless of sex or gender.

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice of the Baltimore Washington Region

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice represents 19 Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations in Baltimore, Washington and Maryland. After consultation with our Board, our Executive Committee voted unanimously to join as *amicus curiae* in this memorandum. We strongly support the right of all couples to be legally married, with all of its rights and privileges. We are committed to working on this issue until civil marriage is recognized as a civil right in Maryland and in America.

Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore

114 W. Read Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

The ministerial staff of Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore is committed to a social justice ministry where all people are celebrated as gifts from our Creator. It is for this reason that we are honored to associate our church as *amicus curiae* in an effort to secure marriage equality for all people in Maryland.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

AMICI CURIAE INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The Reverend Paul E. Anderson, Pastor
Oaklands Presbyterian Church
Laurel, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. Peter M. Antoci
Episcopal Chaplain
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

Rabbi Donald R. Berlin, Rabbi Emeritus
Temple Oheb Shalom
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. Amina Marie Binta
Covenant Baptist Church
Washington, D.C.

The Reverend Lucy Brady, Pastor
St. Mark's United Church of Christ
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Christa Fuller Burns, Pastor
Faith Presbyterian Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Charles R. Butler, III
President, Interfaith Fairness Coalition of
Maryland, and Trustee, Ecumenicon
Fellowship
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Doris E. Cowan
Parish Associate, Faith Presbyterian Church,
and Board Member, That All May Freely
Serve: Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Thomas E. Davison, Retired
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
Baltimore, Maryland

Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb
Adat Shalom Reconstructionist
Congregation
Bethesda, Maryland

The Reverend John F. Dornheim, Chaplain
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center
Baltimore, Maryland

Rabbi George B. Driesen
Adat Shalom Reconstructionist
Congregation
Bethesda, Maryland

Cantor Larry M. Eschler
Temple Beth Ami
Rockville, Maryland

The Reverend Caroline Fairless
St. James' Episcopal Church
Bowie, Maryland

The Reverend Andrew Foster Connors
Pastor, Brown Memorial Park Avenue
Presbyterian Church
Baltimore, Maryland

Dr. Michael S. Franch, Ethical Culture
Leader and Affiliate Minister
First Unitarian Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Mary D. Gaut, Pastor
Maryland Presbyterian Church
Towson, Maryland

The Reverend Paige Getty, Minister
Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Columbia
Columbia, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. Alison Halsey
Pastor, The First and Franklin Street
Presbyterian Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. Clifford L. Harrison
Retired United Methodist Minister
Frederick, Maryland

The Reverend Jerri Lee Harrison
Associate Minister
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Keith Holder
Associate Minister
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend William A. Holmes
Retired United Methodist Minister
Silver Spring, Maryland

Apostle Dale Jarrett, Senior Pastor
Believers Covenant Fellowship (McLean,
Virginia)
Montgomery Village, Maryland (residence)

Rabbi Jason Kimelman-Block
Silver Spring, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. Fred Lehr
Retired Lutheran Pastor
Severna Park, Maryland

The Reverend T. Stewart Lucas
Assistant to the Rector
Memorial Episcopal Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Martha N. Macgill, Rector
Memorial Episcopal Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. Donna Martin
Hospice Chaplain, United Church of Christ
Columbia, Maryland

The Reverend Anthony W. McCarthy,
Associate Minister
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Deacon Meredith Moise
Deacon in the United Ecumenical Catholic
Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Fred Muir, Minister
Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis
Annapolis, Maryland

The Reverend Clare Petersberger, Minister
The Towson Unitarian Universalist Church
Lutherville, Maryland

The Reverend David L. Pollitt, D.Min.
Retired Member of Baltimore Presbytery
Forest Hill, Maryland

The Reverend Roger Scott Powers, Pastor
Light Street Presbyterian Church
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Carolyn L. Roberts
United Church of Christ Minister
Frederick, Maryland

Rabbi Robert Saks
Congregation Bet Mishapchah
Washington, D.C.

Rabbi Judith Seid
Baltimore Jewish Cultural Chavurah
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Dr. John R. Sharp
Interim Pastor
Springfield Presbyterian Church
Sykesville, Maryland

Rabbi David Spey
Temple Beth Ami
Rockville, Maryland

Rabbi Sonya Starr
Reconstructionist Rabbi
Columbia, Maryland

The Reverend Donald E. Stroud
Minister of Outreach and Reconciliation
That All May Freely Serve – Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Bruce G. Swanson
Pastor, First and St. Stephen's United
Church of Christ
Baltimore, Maryland

Monsignor John W. Sweeley, Th. D.
Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch –
Malabar Rite
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverends Barbara W. and
Jaco B. ten Hove, Co-Ministers
Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church
Adelphi, Maryland

The Reverend Harris Thomas
Founding Pastor
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Jamie Washington
Associate Minister
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

APPENDIX C

STATEMENT ON EQUAL ACCESS TO MARRIAGE

By Christian Clergy of Maryland

We the undersigned ministers of Christian denominations within the State of Maryland are alarmed by the inflammatory, misleading, and discriminatory rhetoric of some Christian ministers who would have their voice be perceived as speaking for all Christians in advocating for the denial of equal civil rights for gay and lesbian couples in Maryland. Therefore, we shall not be silent and allow such Christian ministers to subvert the language and symbols of the Christian faith for the purpose of inciting fear against the gay and lesbian citizens of Maryland. We shall not be silent and allow to go unchallenged a selective interpretation of Scripture used as the basis of social policy to strip gay and lesbian citizens of their basic civil rights. We shall not be silent and allow fellow human beings who are gay and lesbian to be judicially or legislatively reduced to second class citizenship without full access to the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We call Christians and all people of faith within Maryland to stand with us. Let us affirm that all people are created in the image of God, having the same rights and responsibilities with us as citizens, and for those who are members of faith communities, having the same rights and responsibilities as believers with us in the household of faith.

At this time in the history of Maryland we express particular concern for lesbians and gay men in our society and for the abuse of them in the name of Christianity.

Because we

reject the exploitation of selected verses of the Bible to declare same-gender sexual expression to be per se sinful;

Because we

understand sin to be whatever alienates a person from trust in God and to have the effect of distorting the image of God in ourselves and others;

Because we

believe that both heterosexual and homosexual relations are capable of being sinful and of being faithful;

Because we

know there are many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people active within our various Christian denominations and also know them to be some of the most faithful and dedicated Christians within our communities;

Because we

believe and adhere to a strict separation of church and state, whereby no laws shall be enacted to establish any specific religion or theological doctrine;

Because we

do not wish to see any religious institution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security of the free exercise of religion, and at the same time, equal and common to all others;

Because we

recognize the historical and long-standing distinction between civil marriage and the rite of Christian marriage;

Because we

believe the State of Maryland has no compelling interest in restricting civil marriage to opposite-gender couples, with the result that gay and lesbian couples are denied the protections and responsibilities of marriage;

Therefore, we support

the efforts to secure marriage equality for the gay and lesbian citizens of the State of Maryland;

And, we urge

the civil community to recognize that gay and lesbian citizens are entitled to all the rights, benefits, privileges and responsibilities that living in this democratic state and nation entails, including the right of civil marriage.

In conclusion, we affirm

that Christ Jesus is our peace, who has broken down all dividing walls of hostility; and who calls us to lead people into responsible and faithful relationships, committing themselves to one another and to God's loving presence.

**105 Maryland Christian Clergy Endorsements of the
Statement of Equal Access to Marriage**
(as of June 9, 2005)

Rev. Dr. James H. Adams
Presbyterian Church (USA), Retired,
Rockville

Rev. Paul E. Anderson
Pastor, Oaklands Presbyterian Church,
Presbyterian Church (USA), Laurel

Rev. Douglas E. Bartlett
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. R. Whitfield Bass
Pastor, St. John United, Columbia

Rev. Dr. William L. Bearden
PC(USA), Retired, Baltimore

Rev. James M. Bell
Associate Conference Minister, Central
Atlantic Conference, United Church of
Christ, Baltimore

Rev. Dorothy Boulton
Catonsville Presbyterian Church, Catonsville

Rev. Dr. Wayne Boulton
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Christa Fuller Burns
Faith Presbyterian Church, PC(USA),
Baltimore

Pastor Jason Burns
St. Timothy Lutheran Church, ELCA,
Timonium

Rev. Currie Burris
Silver Spring Presbyterian Church,
PC(USA), Silver Spring

Rev. Lon B. Chesnutt
United Methodist Church, Columbia

Rev. Shirley B. Coll
UCC, Retired, Potomac

Rev. Elizabeth Colton
UCC, Catonsville

Rev. Kate Foster Connors
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Andrew Foster Connors
Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian
Church, PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Rachel Cornwell
United Methodist Church, Bethesda

Rev. Doris E. Cowan
Parish Associate, Faith Presbyterian Church,
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. James R. Crowder
Episcopal Priest, Retired, Baltimore

Rev. Robert E. Daly
Episcopal Church, Retired Priest, Baltimore

Rev. Thomas E. Davison
ELCA, Baltimore

Rev. Patricia J. de Beer
Rector, St. Martins-In-The-Field,
Severna Park

Rev. Dr. John R. Deckenback
Conference Minister, Central Atlantic
Conference, UCC, Frederick

Rev. Sandy Dodson
Christ Congregational Church, UCC,
Silver Spring

Rev. John F. Dornheim
Chaplain, JHBMC, Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America, Baltimore

Rev. Ted Dürr
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Dale W. Dusman
ELCA, Baltimore

Rev. Mary Louise Ellenberger
PC(USA), Retired, Towson

Rev. Caroline Fairless
St. James Episcopal Church, Bowie

Kristen Claire Foley
Pastoral Intern, Metropolitan Community
Church Baltimore/UFMCC, Baltimore

Rev. H. Thomas Foley
PC(USA), Baltimore Presbytery, Retired,
Towson

Rev. Dr. Jerrold L. Foltz
Associate Conference Minister for the
Catoctin Association, Central Atlantic
Conference, UCC, 36 churches in
Washington, Frederick, and Carroll Counties

Rev. Gordon M. Forbes
UCC, Rockville

Rev. Mary D. Gaut
PC(USA), Towson

Rev. Columba Gilliss
Episcopal Church, Retired, Frederick

Rev. Arthur Dan Gleckler
Pastor, United Methodist Church, Baltimore-
Washington Conference, Baltimore

Rev. Gerald Goethe
United Methodist Church, Retired, Columbia

Rev. Ann Gordon
St. John's of Baltimore City United Methodist
Church, Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Andrew L. Gunn
UMC, Germantown

Rev. Dr. Alison Halsey
Pastor, First and Franklin Street Presbyterian
Church, Baltimore

Rev. Clifford L. Harrison
United Methodist, Frederick

Rev. Anita E. Hendrix, D.Min.
PC(USA), Hunting Ridge Presbyterian
Church, Baltimore

Rev. Mr. Harry L. Holfelder
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. James C. Holmes
Episcopal Church, Baltimore

Rev. William A. Holmes
UMC, Baltimore/Washington Annual
Conference, Silver Spring

Rev. Mark A. G. Huffman
ELCA, Lutherville

Rev. Dr. Margee Adams Iddings
PC(USA), Flintstone

Rev. J. Calvin Jackson
PC(USA), Retired, Glen Arm

Rev. T. Gregory Knepp
Lutheran (ELCA), Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Kovacs
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Barbara Ann Laukaitis
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Florence L. Ledyard
Rector, St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church,
Baltimore

Pastor Fred Lehr
Lutheran (ELCA), Retired, Severna Park

Rev. Herbert K. Lodder
Chaplain JHBMC, Baltimore

Rev. T. Stewart Lucas
Memorial Episcopal Church, Baltimore

Rev. Martha Macgill
Memorial Episcopal Church, Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Donna Martin
Hospice Chaplain, United Methodist Church,
Columbia

Rev. Ronald Martin-Minnich
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Teresa Martin-Minnich
Roland Park Presbyterian Church, PC(USA),
Baltimore

Rev. C. Miller
ELCA, Laurel

Rev. Ms. Meredith Moise
Deacon, United Reform Catholic Church,
Baltimore

Rev. Judy Moller
ELCA, Cascade

Rev. Lance Mullins
Pastor, New Covenant Metropolitan
Community Church, Columbia

Rev. Dr. Howard Nash
Pastor, St. Johns United Methodist Church of
Hamilton, Baltimore

Rev. David K. North
Pastor, Holy Redeemer Metropolitan
Community Church, College Park

Rev. Catherine J. Oatman
United Evangelical, UCC, Baltimore

Rev. John Oliver
UCC, Hospice Chaplain, Baltimore

Rev. Beth A. O'Malley
UCC, Columbia United Christian Church,
Columbia

Rev. David L. Pollitt, D.Min.
PC(USA), Forest Hill

Rev. Roger Scott Powers
Pastor, Light Street Presbyterian Church,
Baltimore

Rev. R. Bruce Poynter
UMC (Retired), Frederick

Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Price
Retired, UMC, Bowie

Rev. Neta Pringle
Interim Pastor, Govans Presbyterian Church,
Baltimore

Rev. David S. Remington
Episcopal Priest, Retired, Baltimore

Rev. Gerry Rickel
Second English Lutheran Church, Baltimore

Rev. Carolyn L. Roberts
UCC, Frederick

Rev. P. Barrett Rudd, D.Min.
PC(USA), Lutherville

Rev. Narka Keller Ryan
Retired, Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ), Baltimore

Rev. Dr. William S. Ryan
Retired, Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ), Catonsville

Rev. Wayne E. Schwandt
Metropolitan Community Church of the
Chesapeake, Annapolis

Rev. Dr. John R. Sharp
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Richard W. Shreffler
First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church,
Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Victoria R. Sirota
Vicar, Church of the Holy Nativity
(Episcopal), Baltimore

Rev. Scott Slater
Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal),
Towson

Rev. Allison C. G. Smith
Bethesda United Church of Christ, Bethesda

Rev. Ben H. Smith, Jr.
The Episcopal Cathedral of the Incarnation,
Baltimore

Rev. Frank Smith
New Church in Spirit, Baltimore

Rev. Kingsley Smith
Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal),
Towson

Rev. R. David Smith
Metropolitan Community Church of
Baltimore, Baltimore

Rev. Mr. Donald E. Stroud
PC(USA), That All May Freely Serve:
Baltimore, Baltimore

Rev. Barbara L. Stumpf
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Bruce G. Swanson
Pastor, First and St. Stephen's United Church
of Christ, Baltimore

Rev. Robert E. Taylor, O.S.L.
Open Door Metropolitan Community Church,
Boys

Rev. James A. Todhunter
Senior Minister, Christ Congregational
Church, UCC, Silver Spring

Rev. Janice L. Trammell-Savin
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Paul D. Tunkle
Rector, Episcopal Church of the Redeemer,
Baltimore

Rev. Betty Ure
Columbia United Christian Church, UCC,
Columbia

Rev. Herbert Valentine
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Gretchen van Utt
PC(USA), Baltimore

Rev. Nancy J. Webb
Foundry United Methodist Church, Suitland

Rev. Frederick K. Weimert
American Baptist Church USA, Towson

Rev. Lauren M. Welch
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Edwin O. Wenck
United Church of Christ, Baltimore

Rev. Tammy Wooliver
Episcopal Priest, Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Ira Zepp
United Methodist Church, Westminster

APPENDIX D



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Home > Issues > Peace Building Campaign > Minute on Civil Marriage

Minute on Civil Marriage

The Executive Committee of the AFSC Board of Directors, acting at the direction of the full board, approved the following statement in January, 2004. A "minute" is a Quaker term that refers to a formal communication from a group of people who are part of the larger Religious Society of Friends.

Please note that AFSC does not speak for all Friends, who have widely differing views on the subject of equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and on proposed "marriage amendments." There is no central governing authority in the Religious Society of Friends that speaks for all Quakers.

Board Executive Committee meeting, January 9-10, 2004

BDEX04-12: Minute on Civil Marriage

The Board Executive Committee made minor changes in the final two paragraphs of the Proposed Minute on Equality of Rights with Regard to Civil Marriage (Supporting Paper #8A) as follows:

We minute our support for equal civil marriage rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. We are aware that many are calling for civil unions for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and some people wish to reserve civil marriage for heterosexual couples alone. It is our belief that government sanction should be applied equally. All couples should be granted civil union licenses or all should be granted marriage licenses.

In doing so, we are careful to distinguish between civil law, in which no single religious view should predominate, and the right of various faith traditions, denominations, and congregations to decide for themselves whether they will perform, support, or recognize the marriages of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Similarly,

Contact Us

Kay Whitlock

Peace Building in a
Time of Cultural War
Campaign Organizer

Community Relations
Unit

1501 Cherry St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Phone:

(406) 721-7844

Fax:

(406) 728-2314

Email:

buildpeace@afsc.org

we wish to distinguish between the necessity for equality in the matter of civil law and coercive governmental "marriage promotion" policies that seek to enforce only one standard of worthiness for people who receive government assistance. We uphold equality in civil law and the principle of free choice in the matter of marriage while rejecting the idea that the worthiness of persons and families is determined by marital status. Approved.



Social Justice Statements

[Unitarian Universalist Association Home](#)

[About Us](#) | [Programs & Services](#) | [News](#) | [Publications](#) | [Giving & Fundraising](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Search Our Site 

[Advanced Search](#)

Powered by Google™

[Social Justice Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Affiliates](#)

[Awards](#)

[Discussion Forums](#)

[Issues](#)

[Resources](#)

[Statements](#)

[What You Can Do!](#)

[Social Justice Statements](#)

• [Actions by Year](#)

• [Resources for](#)

[Acting](#)

• [Search](#)

• [CSW](#)

• [SRC Guidelines](#)

[Topical List](#)

• [Aging](#)

• [Agriculture](#)

• [Bisexuals](#)

• [Civil Liberties](#)

• [Congress](#)

• [Corporate](#)

[Responsibility](#)

• [Criminal Justice](#)

• [Disarmament](#)

• [Ecology](#)

• [Economic Justice](#)

• [Energy](#)

• [Equal Opportunity](#)

• [Gay Men](#)

• [Government](#)

[Harassment](#)

• [Health](#)

• [Hunger](#)

• [Immediate Witness](#)

• [International](#)

[Relations](#)

• [Lesbians](#)

Support of the Right to Marry for Same-Sex Couples

1996 Resolution of Immediate Witness

Because Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and

Because marriage is held in honor among the blessings of life; and

WHEREAS many states, the Congress, and the President of the United States are acting to void the recognition of same-sex marriages and to deny "full faith and credit" to such marriages formalized in Hawaii or any other state;

WHEREAS debate about legally recognized marriage to same-sex couples has focused on the objections of certain religious communities, while the Unitarian Universalist Association has adopted numerous resolutions over the last twenty-six years supporting equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons, including support of Ceremonies of Union between members of the same sex; and

WHEREAS the Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association have voted their support for the right to marry for same-sex couples;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the 1996 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association adopts a position in support of legal recognition for marriage between members of the same sex;

BE IT further resolved that the 1996 General Assembly urges the Unitarian Universalist Association to make this position known through the media; and

BE IT finally resolved that the 1996 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges the member congregations to proclaim the worth of marriage between any two committed persons and to make this position known in their home communities.

[More on Actions of Immediate Witness](#)

- [Peace](#)
 - [Population](#)
 - [Racial Justice](#)
 - [Religious Freedom](#)
 - [War Resisters](#)
 - [Women's Rights](#)
 - [Youth](#)
- Quick Links**
- [Washington Office for Advocacy](#)
 - [Office for Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns](#)

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Programs & Services](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Publications](#) | [Giving & Funding](#) | [Press Room](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#)

Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon St. | Boston, MA 02108 | 617-742-2100



© Copyright 2005 Unitarian Universalist Association
7009 accesses to this page since October 8, 1999





Freedom to Marry, for all People

Search Our Site

[Advanced Search](#)
Powered by Google™

News Home

Freedom to Marry

- [concerning Ministers](#)
- [from the UUA](#)
- [all other media](#)
- [marriage certificates](#)
- [non-signing ministers](#)

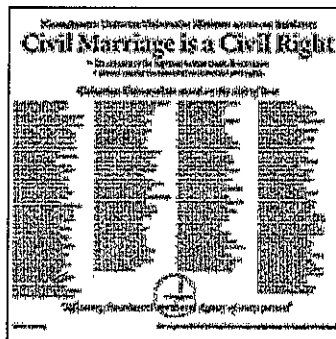
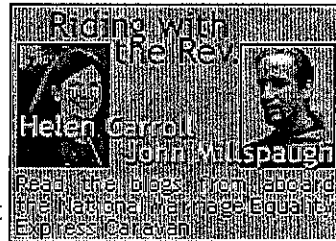
State Coverage:

- [California](#)
- [Florida](#)
- [Georgia](#)
- [Maryland](#)
- [Massachusetts](#)
- [New York](#)
- [Oregon](#)

Events

At the 1996 [General Assembly](#), delegates voted overwhelmingly to call for the [legalization of same-sex marriage](#). The Unitarian Universalist Association has a long-standing and deeply held commitment to support full equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, going back 33 years to 1970. The Association, through [action of its General Assembly](#) and congregational actions, has [advocated for nondiscrimination](#) and hate crimes

[Listen to Jason Shelton's new song, "Standing on the Side of Love,"](#) written in tribute to Pres. William S. Kirkford's prophetic leadership and witness in support of Freedom to Marry. Soloist: Jeannie Gagne. Copyright 2004 Jason Shelton, used with permission, all rights reserved.



Ad which ran in the March 10, 2004 edition of *The Boston Globe* in support of same sex marriage. [\(Click here for PDF\)](#)

Previous UUA Coverage

[2/11/05 UUA Receives Award from Religious Coalition for Freedom to Marry](#)

[2/8/05 Freedom to Marry Week Honors Loving UU Same Sex Couples](#)

[11/16/04 We Give Thanks—Reflections on Equal Marriage, One Year Later](#)

[10/28/04 States Facing Constitutional Amendments Banning Same-sex Marriage](#)

[10/25/04 Georgia: UU congregations oppose state ballot initiative; declare congregations "discrimination-free zones"](#)

[10/05/04 UU Ministers Join Marriage Equality Caravan to Mobilize Support for Equal Rights](#)

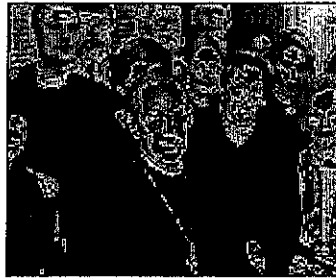
[05/20/04 Fifty same-sex couples married at Arlington Street Church](#)

[05/17/04 Goodridges married at UUA headquarters](#)

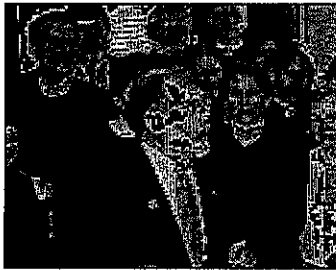
[05/17/04 Massachusetts towns issue licenses to same-sex couples](#)

[04/13/04 Strategic advice on marriage equality from Evan Wolfson, Executive Director of Freedom to Marry](#)

legislation; our ministers have performed ceremonies of union for same-sex couples; and now, the Association directs its attention toward the support for legalized same-sex marriage. Notable among these actions are:



Feb. 5, 2004 Bishop Thomas Shaw addresses the media at RCFM press conference



Feb. 5 2004 John Buehrens, former UUA president, speaks at RCFM press conference

- Non-discrimination in ministerial employment in 1980
- Support of Religious leaders gather in support of civil and lesbian services of union, in 1984
- Supporting legal equity for gays and lesbians, in 1987
- Opposing legalization of discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, in 1992
- Support of the Right to Marry for Same-Sex Couples, in 1996.



Religious leaders gather in support of civil and lesbian services of union, in 1984

On December 21, 1999, then-UUA President John A. Buehrens wrote to then-Vermont Governor Howard Dean, in support of the Vermont State Supreme court's unanimous decision that Vermont must guarantee the same protection and benefits to gay and

03/16/04 Unitarian Universalist Ministers Charged With Solemnizing Unlicensed Marriages

03/08/04 An Open Letter to President Bush, by the Rev. Meg A. Riley

02/24/04 Unitarian Universalist Association President Opposes Call for Federal Constitutional Amendment

02/19/04 UUA President Congratulates Newly-Married Couples in San Francisco

02/05/04 Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry Meets at UUA Headquarters

02/05/04 Clergy gather at UUA in support of freedom to marry

02/04/04 UUA President Applauds Ruling in Favor of Same Sex Marriage

1/15/04 Black supporters of gays ignored, by Deb Price, Detroit News


1/14/04 Interfaith Support of Same Sex Marriage Showcased in State House Rally



11/18/03 UUA President's Statement on November Supreme Judicial Court ruling

6/26/03 Pres. William G. Sinkford's Statement on the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of Lawrence et al v. Texas

6/05/03 Religious Leaders Call for Support of Civil Marriage

lesbian couples that it does for heterosexual couples. In March, 2000, Unitarian Universalist ministers and lay people were active in giving testimony and providing support for an action taken by the Vermont legislature in April, which established Vermont's landmark Civil Union Bill.

On April 11, 2001, seven gay and lesbian couples (including seven Unitarian Universalists) brought suit in Suffolk, Massachusetts Superior Court , asserting that the couples had all been denied marriage licenses and seeking to gain the legal recognition "that same-sex couples -- whose relationships are as loving and as committed as those of heterosexual couples -- have an equal right to civil marriage."

Nearly two years later, on March 4, 2003, the case was heard in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court . While a decision in this case is pending, interfaith support of freedom to marry for same-sex couples continues to grow, as demonstrated at a June 5, 2003 press conference held by the Religious Coalition for Freedom to Marry  and hosted at UUA headquarters.

Meanwhile, efforts by Unitarian Universalists to support equal rights for all persons continue. As support to grant legal standing to same sex couples gains momentum, the voices of several individual members of the UU clergy have been heard on this issue, and the list of UU clergy supporting same-sex marriage (and who refuse to sign marriage licenses until such rights are granted to all) continues to grow. The **Rev. Fred Small** (Littleton, MA), the **Rev. F. Jay Deacon** (Northampton, MA), and the **Rev. Kathleen McTigue** (Hamden, CT) have spearheaded action in their communities along with other members of the clergy, and media coverage of their positions is included here.

UUA President William G. Sinkford, speaking after a decision on the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Lawrence et al v. Texas* was handed down, said, "Laws aimed at discriminating against bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people are affronts to all people, no matter their sexual or gender orientation. These laws have been used to separate and divide us from one another; their intent is to support discrimination and make some people in our country second-class citizens. Unitarian Universalists across our country will continue [our] efforts, grounded in faith, which call us to support everyone's full humanity, everyone's ability to love, and everyone's value in the world."

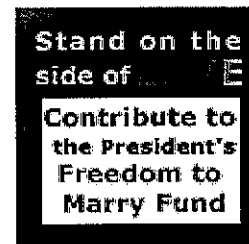
On May 17, 2004, Massachusetts became the first state to legally recognize same-sex marriages. The UUA's president and staff cheered as couples applied for marriage licenses all over the state and hosted the wedding of

for Gays and Lesbians

2/12/03 Massachusetts Interfaith Clergy Pledge for the Freedom to Marry
Frequently Asked Questions

3/26/02 The Meaning of Family

2000 Giving support to Vermont same sex marriage efforts



Julie and Hillary Goodridge at UUA Headquarters. Three days later, after the waiting period imposed on most couples by Massachusetts law, fifty same-sex couples were married in historic Arlington Street Church in Boston.

Freedom to Marry Media Coverage:

- Coverage of UU Ministers' Actions and Ministers' Statements in the Media
- Previous coverage from the UUA
- Additional Media Coverage
- Ministers Issuing Licenses to Same Sex Couples
- Freedom to Marry Graphics for use on UU-related web sites

Unitarian Universalist Clergy Who Will Not Sign Marriage Licenses Until Same Sex Couples Are Allowed to Marry

Freedom To Marry Coalition's Massachusetts's Survey on Civil Marriage (Oct. 2003)

Survey Questions ☺
Key Findings ☺

State by State Coverage and information on Freedom to Marry Coalitions in U.S. states:

- California
- Connecticut ☺
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii ☺
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire ☺
- New Jersey ☺
- New York
- Vermont ☺
- Washington ☺

For more information:

- For information on UUA services in support of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender persons, visit our website.
- For media information, or to schedule interviews, please contact the UUA Office of Information and Public Witness.
- Massachusetts Interfaith Clergy Pledge for the Freedom to Marry
Frequently Asked Questions
- Freedom to Marry ☺ is headed by Evan Wolfson, one of America's leading lesbian/gay rights advocates and lawyers.

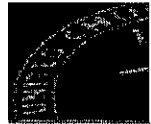
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#)

Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon St. | Boston, MA 02108 | 617-742-2100



© Copyright 2005 Unitarian Universalist Association
23239 accesses to this page since February 9, 2004





Shop at Pilgrim Press Online
Click Here!
Email this Page!



Home: Newsroom: UCC News Release

United Church of Christ leaders denounce Federal Marriage Amendment; call for action and dialogue on marriage

April 28, 2004

ATLANTA—The Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, meeting in Atlanta, Monday (April 26) released a statement calling for the defeat of any federal or state "Defense of Marriage"-type legislation and inviting continued "serious, respectful, responsible discussions about...marriage, including diverse understandings of marriage." Earlier, the Boards of Directors of the denomination's four covenanted ministries—Justice and Witness Ministries, Local Church Ministries, Office of General Ministries and Wider Church Ministries—passed similar resolutions, with much common text, in their joint board meetings, held April 22-25 in Atlanta.

In calling for the defeat of the Federal Marriage Amendment, the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996, and the defeat or repeal of any similar State legislation, UCC leaders affirmed "equal rights for all couples who seek to have their relationships recognized by the State."

They also said, "We hold that, as a child of God, every person is endowed with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside. We believe that recognition of the sacred joining of individuals is deserving of serious, faithful discussion by people of faith."

The UCC Executive Council released the statement and the four Boards passed their resolutions "because there is a need to end the rhetoric which fuels hostility, misunderstanding, fear and hatred expressed toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, and the denial of their equality under law." The approved texts cite the UCC's historic stance with disenfranchised persons, including persons of color and women.

The 1.3-million-member United Church of Christ, with national offices in Cleveland, has some 6,000 local congregations in the United States and Puerto Rico. The UCC's national setting, General Synod and regional and national bodies speak to, but not for, its local churches.

EDITORS AND PRODUCERS: Here are excerpts from the texts of the "Call to Action and Invitation to Dialogue on Marriage" resolutions of the Boards of Directors of the United Church of Christ's Covenanted Ministries, and the statement released by the UCC's Executive Council April 26, 2004.

The United Church of Christ has historically stood with the disenfranchised. From support by our predecessor denominations for abolition of slavery to the recognition of women as equal partners in religious leadership, we have consistently honored the biblical injunction to support 'the least of these.' We hold that, as a child of God, every person is endowed with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside. We believe that recognition of the sacred joining of individuals is deserving of serious, faithful discussion by

Reference

Frequently asked questions regarding the Call to Action and Invitation adopted by the Council of the Christ.

✦ F.A.Q.

How to Read

You will need to install a free v Acrobat Reader to view files posted or elsewhere on

✦ Press Release
✦ Download

For More Information

Barb Powell
United Church of Christ
700 Prospect Street
Cleveland, OH 44115
216-736-2175
powellb@ucc.org

people of faith, taking into consideration the long, complex history of marriage and family life, layered as it is by cultural practices, economic realities, political dynamics, religious history, and biblical interpretation.


Because there is a need to end the rhetoric which fuels hostility, misunderstanding, fear and hatred expressed toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, and the denial of their equality under the law... we...

- Call for the defeat of the Federal Marriage Amendment and the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 (DOMA);
- Call for the defeat or repeal of any similar Amendments to the Constitution of any State and the defeat or repeal of any State's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) or similar legislation...
- Encourage and support the continued collaborative efforts of the UCC to develop educational resources, study guides and social policy analyses for use by UCC members and congregations in addressing the issues of marriage;
- Urge all settings of the UCC and individual church members to engage in serious, respectful, responsible discussions about the study of marriage, including diverse understandings of marriage;
- Commend the resources now available to our churches called "God Is Still Speaking, About Marriage." This resource is a discussion guide for congregations to engage in healthy conversations and study about marriage, biblical and theological reflections on covenant and marriage, legal and economic aspects of marriage, and the role of the church in making marriages official and legal (see ; and
- Affirm equal rights for all couples who seek to have their relationships recognized by the State.

The national setting of the United Church of Christ is committed to being in ministry in ways that are multiracial, multicultural, open and affirming, accessible to all, and advocate for peace with justice.

⤴ Top

 **Printer Version**

 **E-mail this Page!**



THE ALLIANCE OF BAPTISTS

[Home](#)[Contents](#)[Contact Us](#)[How to Join](#)[Search](#)

Statement of Concern

The Alliance of Baptists is an alliance of individuals and churches dedicated to the preservation of historic Baptist principles, freedoms, and traditions, and to the expression of our ministry and mission through cooperative relationships with other Baptist bodies and the larger Christian community.

The Alliance of Baptists

Statement on Same Sex Marriage

April 17, 2004

[Home](#)[Alliance Governance](#)[Mission Offering](#)[Cuba Partnerships](#)[Calendar](#)[Newsletters](#)[Resources](#)[Placement](#)[Endorsement](#)[Alliance Affiliations](#)

Affirming that our federal and state constitutions exist to protect the rights of minorities from the tyranny of the majority and in the context of the current debate over same-sex marriage, we of the Alliance of Baptists decry the politicization of same-sex marriage in the current presidential contest and other races for public office. We specifically reject the proposed amendments to the constitution of the United States and state constitutions that would enshrine discrimination against sexual minorities and define marriage in such a way as to deny same-sex couples a legal framework in which to provide for one another and those entrusted to their care.

As Christians and as Baptists, we particularly lament the denigration of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender sisters and brothers in this debate by those who claim to speak for God. We affirm that the Alliance of Baptists supports the rights of all citizens to full marriage equality, and we affirm anew that the Alliance will "create places of refuge and renewal for those who are ignored by the church."

This Statement of Concern was adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Alliance of Baptists meeting at First Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio.

[Download this statement.](#)

Copyright © 2005 Alliance of Baptists
1328 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036
Phone 202.745.7609 Toll-free 866.745.7609
Last modified: January 21, 2005

Send mail to Webmaster with questions or comments about this web site.



Reconciling Ministries Network

Events | Resources | F.A.Q. | Who Are We

Go to...

[Contribute](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Join Us](#)

[Communities](#)

[Flashnet](#)

Search RMN

[Parents Reconciling Network](#)

[Reconciling Ministries Clergy](#)

[Mosaic](#)

[UMOC](#)

Reconciling Ministries Network is a national grassroots organization that exists through the full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the United Methodist Church, both in policy and practice.

-RMN Mission Statement

DEVOTION

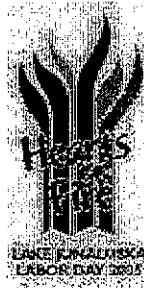
weekly

FLASHNET

weekly e-digest

KATALYS

quarterly newsletter



Convo 2005 - Hearts on Fire LABOR DAY WEEKEND (Sept. 2-5) 2005 LAKE JUNALUSKA, North Carolina

Come to the Reconciling Convocation! We hope to gather 400 United Methodists to envision the United Methodist Church truly opening itself to the graces of the LGBT community. We will see our family face to face and commit ourselves to growing God's church.

"When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. With a sound like a strong wind, gale force--no one could tell where it came from--it filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through them and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them." (Peterson, *The Message*)

Awards and Entertainment: Sunday evening concert by Jason and DeMar

Donations: Help assure the success of Hearts on Fire! - name one of your

Visit to the [Convo Information page](#).

STROUD PENALTY OVERTURNED ON APPEAL! (POSTED--APRIL 29)



By a decision of 8 to 1 the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals of the United Methodist Church overturned the verdict and penalty of the trial court that removed the ordination credentials of Rev. Beth Stroud.

The evidence was sustained. The decision of the committee rested on two points: (1) the General Conference did what it was mandated to do by the Judicial Council decision 702 (to define the terms "self-avowed practicing homosexual" and "contrary to Christian teaching" before depriving someone of their appointment rights); and (2) the declaration that homosexuality is "contrary to Christian teaching" amounts to a new doctrine and, as such, needs to go through certain specified procedures before it can be adopted.

valid. These steps require either a constitutional amendment or a declaration that this standard is "not contrary to" our present and existing doctrinal standards (see Article 102, p. 58 of the 2000 Discipline). Neither of these steps has been taken.

The dissenting opinion stated that this appellate body did not have the authority to take this action to define "doctrine" and in this action has actually created legislative authority for the church.

Rev. Beth Stroud responded, "This gives me hope that the UMC, divided as it is, has within itself the resources to do justice." She also expressed thankfulness that the final decision is not up to her!

RMN Welcomes New Board Members



*Back row, Rev. David Aslesen, Sally Sparks, Will Green, Lanny Ballard, Robt. J. Green
Front row, Esther Villareal Houser, Betty Dorr, Rev. Sharon Moe, Rev. Dr. Jo Ann*

Not pictured, Randall Miller

Read more about all of the current RMN board members [here](#).

Ecumenical Welcoming Ministries

RMN is part of a [larger ministry](#) of many Christian denominations.

RMN Extension Ministries

RMN works with a wide-variety of individuals and organizations, including many extension ministries:

- **Methodist Students for an All Inclusive Church** (MOSAIC)
Comprised of young United Methodists (young adults, students, and seminarians), MOSAIC's mission is to hold the United Methodist Church to be the full body of Christ. It seeks to create change in Church policies and practices.

exclusionary of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, their allies.

- **Parents Reconciling Network** (PRN)

PRN's purpose is to present a visible witness of parents in support of the denomination's anti-homosexual stance and providing their homosexual same rights as heterosexual United Methodists.

- **Reconciling Ministries Clergy** (RMC)

The Reconciling Ministries Clergy is comprised of persons called to ordination within the United Methodist Church who summon the Church to a deeper spiritual and theological integrity in relationship to persons of all sexual and gender identities and their full inclusion in all aspects of the church.

The network is dedicated to active forms of teaching, organizing, strategizing, resistance and support for one another to help the church become more of the radical love of Christ.

- **United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church** (UMOC)

UMOC was founded in 2000, at a historic gathering of United Methodists of color. The event was historic because it represented the first gathering of people of color and ethnic lines for the purpose of engaging the subject of heterosexism and homophobia in Christianity and the United Methodist Church -- the challenges facing the church. These dialogues on the common grounds of inclusivity and diversity culminated in a statement entitled United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church. In the following months, the statement was widely supported by United Methodists of Color throughout the United States and the Philippines.

Please send problems, comments, suggestions for this site to:
webspinner@rmnetwork.org

Reconciling Ministries Network © 2005

PRESS RELEASE

THE CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Statement on Resolutions Adopted by the 221st Convention of the Diocese.

The Convention of the Diocese of Maryland is made up of lay representatives and the clergy of the 119 parishes and missions in the Diocese, which includes ten counties (west of the Chesapeake) and Baltimore City. Resolutions are submitted by laity and clergy, discussed on the floor of Convention, and voted on by all delegates to the Convention. Normally the bishops do not vote on resolutions, although each bishop is entitled to vote.

We are a Diocese and Church keenly supportive of issues of social justice. It is clear that Our Lord Jesus Christ worked among the poor and spoke out for the marginalized. Issues of social justice lie at the heart of the Gospel. All persons are loved children of God, and Jesus and our Baptismal Covenant call us to “love our neighbor” and to “respect the dignity of every person.” As we “seek and serve Christ in every person,” we are called to defend the rights of all persons and fight against bigotry and discrimination on every level.

The Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church have long called for appropriate pastoral care of and Christian respect for gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Members of our Church around the world interpret Scriptural passages applied to homosexuality in different ways. In this Diocese, we acknowledge with thanksgiving gay and lesbian members some of whom are in committed, life-long relationship. As a Church we have not authorized the blessing of same-sex unions. We do support the rights of same-sex partners to equal protection under the laws of our state and nation.

At our Convention four Resolutions were presented, debated, and passed by a substantial majority. One Resolution calls for the establishment of a Task Force of laity and clergy to study appropriate pastoral responses to couples living in relationships other than marriage. This Task Force is charged with collecting resources, creating a study guide, and reporting to next year’s Convention. Another Resolution supports legislation on the state and federal levels which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Another Resolution supports legislation to provide benefits to same-sex couples. Finally, another Resolution opposes a Constitutional Amendment banning same-sex marriage.

The Right Reverend Robert W. Ihloff, D.Min., D.D.
Bishop of Maryland

Resolution 2005-2

Oppose Constitutional Amendments Banning Same-Sex Marriages

Submitted by:

The Rev. Beatrice M. Billups
The Rev. James R. Crowder
The Rev. Frank E. Fortkamp
Christina Harris
The Rev. Eleanor Holland
The Rev. Alice Jellema
The Rev. T. Stewart Lucas
The Rev. Martha Macgill
Louise E. Miller
The Rev. Ronald H. Miller
The Rev. Dr. Victoria R. Sirota
The Rev. Scott Slater
The Rev. P. Kingsley Smith
The Rev. Lee Ann Tolzmann
The Rev. Kathryn A. Wajda
The Rev. Lauren M. Welch
The Rev. Tammy Wooliver

RESOLVED, that the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, meeting in Convention May 6-7, 2005, opposes any amendment to the Constitution of the United States or the Maryland State Constitution which would prohibit civil marriage or unions between persons of the same sex.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Convention is directed to communicate this resolution to the members of the Maryland House of Delegates, Maryland Senate, and to the United States Senators from Maryland as well as the Maryland delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Explanation

There have been a number of proposals to amend the U.S. and Maryland State constitutions for the purpose of prohibiting marriage and/or civil unions between persons of the same sex, including Maryland House Bill 1220. These attempts to modify the federal and state constitutions would create new discriminatory barriers to gay and lesbian persons who desire equality in taxation, child custody, personal finances, and the right to make health care decisions for elderly or sick partners. They also would obstruct the progress being made by some jurisdictions where new understandings of civil marriage are evolving. In Massachusetts, Vermont, Canada, and several western European countries, a legal bond between committed, life-long, monogamous couples is recognized by the state for purposes of taxation, property ownership, inheritance, parental rights, and health care. The proposed constitutional amendments close the door on such solutions and encumber future leaders with a discriminatory provision that would be difficult to change. The blessing of marriages as religious sacraments is performed separately by the church and is not required or suggested by this resolution.

Resolution 2005-3

Support Legislation Providing Benefits to Same Sex Couples

Submitted by:

The Rev. Beatrice M. Billups
The Rev. James R. Crowder
The Rev. Frank E. Fortkamp
Christina Harris
The Rev. Eleanor Holland
The Rev. Alice Jellema
The Rev. T. Stewart Lucas
The Rev. Martha Macgill
Louise E. Miller
The Rev. Ronald H. Miller
The Rev. Dr. Victoria R. Sirota
The Rev. Scott Slater
The Rev. P. Kingsley Smith
The Rev. Lee Ann Tolzmann
The Rev. Kathryn A. Wajda
The Rev. Lauren M. Welch
The Rev. Tammy Wooliver

RESOLVED, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, meeting in Convention May 6-7, 2005, supports efforts to provide basic benefits to same-sex couples, including but not limited to full privileges of joint ownership of real property, inheritance without discriminatory treatment in tax law, equal child custody and visitation privileges, the ability to make hospital visits with an incapacitated partner as well as the authority to make decisions regarding medical treatment and the disposition of bodily remains,

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Convention is directed to communicate this resolution to the members of the Maryland House of Delegates, Maryland Senate, the Governor of Maryland, and to the United States Senators from Maryland as well as the Maryland delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Explanation

The 1994 Resolution D-006 reads "Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 71st General Convention call upon municipal council, state legislatures and the United States Congress to approve measures giving gay and lesbian couples protection[s] such as: bereavement and family leave policies; health benefits, pension benefits; real-estate transfer tax benefits, and commitments to mutual support enjoyed by non-gay married couples."

Because same-sex couples are currently excluded from civil marriage under the laws of the State of Maryland and the federal Defense of Marriage Act, numerous discriminatory barriers exist that exclude such couples from basic civil rights including the right to make health care decisions for a sick partner, the right to visit a partner in a health care facility, and the right to inherit property and make funeral arrangements when a partner dies. Several attempts have been made in the Maryland General Assembly to remove these barriers from the law, including the Basic Human Rights Act of 2005 and the Medical Decision Making Act of 2005. The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland should support these pieces of legislation and others like them as a witness to our commitment to "strive for justice and peace for all people and respect the dignity of every human being." (BCP, p. 305)

Resolution 2005-4

Prohibit Discrimination based on Gender Identity or Expression

Submitted by:

The Rev. Beatrice M. Billups
The Rev. James R. Crowder
The Rev. Frank E. Fortkamp
Christina Harris
The Rev. Eleanor Holland
The Rev. Alice Jellema
The Rev. T. Stewart Lucas
The Rev. Martha Macgill
Louise E. Miller
The Rev. Ronald H. Miller
The Rev. Dr. Victoria R. Sirota
The Rev. Scott Slater
The Rev. P. Kingsley Smith
The Rev. Lee Ann Tolzmann
The Rev. Kathryn A. Wajda
The Rev. Lauren M. Welch
The Rev. Tammy Wooliver

RESOLVED, that the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, meeting in Convention May 6-7, 2005, opposes discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression as well as sexual orientation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Convention be directed to communicate this resolution to the members of the Maryland House of Delegates, Maryland Senate, and to the United States Senators from Maryland as well as the Maryland delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Explanation

In our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. It has long been the policy of the Diocese of Maryland to oppose discrimination in all its forms. This resolution reaffirms and expands the scope of our commitment to inclusion, equality, and non-discrimination toward individuals and groups that have often been devalued and disregarded.

This resolution expands the 2000 Resolution D009 which reads:

"Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church condemn all acts motivated by hate against any individual or group of persons as totally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

"Resolved, That this convention direct the national office of the Episcopal Church to continue and increase the 'Stop the Hate' campaign, including making available congregational resources for promoting discussion and taking action against incidents of hate motivated by political or religious creed, race, color, ethnic or national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, or age; and be it further

"Resolved, That this Convention urge its members to support the passage of local, state, and national hate crimes legislation which includes any of the above categories among its protected designations."

Resolution 2005-5

Establish a Task Force to Study and Recommend Appropriate Pastoral Responses to Couples Living in Relationships Other than Marriage

Submitted by:

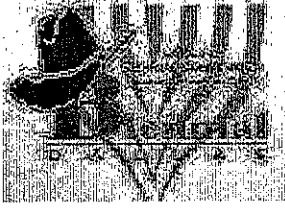
The Rev. Beatrice M. Billups
The Rev. James R. Crowder
The Rev. Frank E. Fortkamp
Christina Harris
The Rev. Eleanor Holland
The Rev. Alice Jellema
The Rev. Mary Jayne Ledgerwood
The Rev. T. Stewart Lucas
The Rev. Martha Macgill
Louise E. Miller
The Rev. Ronald H. Miller
The Rev. Dr. Victoria R. Sirota
The Rev. Scott Slater
The Rev. P. Kingsley Smith
The Rev. Lee Ann Tolzmann
The Rev. Kathryn A. Wajda
The Rev. Lauren M. Welch
The Rev. Tammy Wooliver

RESOLVED, that the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, meeting in Convention May 6-7, 2005, requests the Bishop of Maryland to appoint a task force of lay and clerical members to study issues of marriage, unions, and civil rights; to create a collection of resources and a study guide suitable for use in parishes to further conversation about appropriate Christian responses to questions about who should have access to civil marriage or unions; and to recommend appropriate pastoral responses to couples regardless of sexual orientation living in committed relationships other than marriage. The task force should report its findings at the 2006 Annual Convention of this diocese.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the task force appointed should reflect the diversity of the diocese with respect to age, race, order of ministry, marital status, sexual orientation and the diversity of opinion surrounding these issues.

Explanation

The 74th General Convention, meeting in Minneapolis, passed resolution C051 which stated, in part, "That we commit ourselves, and call our church, in the spirit of Resolution A104 of the 70th General Convention (1991), to continued prayer, study, and discernment on the pastoral care for gay and lesbian persons, to include the compilation and development by a special commission organized and appointed by the Presiding Bishop of resources to facilitate as wide a conversation of discernment as possible throughout the church."



UAHC
64th Biennial Convention
Dallas - October 29-November 2, 1997

Adopted by the General Assembly
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
October 29-November 2, 1997 Dallas

Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian Jewish Couples

Background

In 1987, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) reaffirmed its commitment to welcoming gay and lesbian Jews into its congregations and encouraging their participation in all aspects of synagogue and communal life. In 1993, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President of the UAHC, called upon the Reform movement to support the right of gay and lesbian couples to adopt children, to file joint income-tax returns, and to share in health and death benefits provided to heterosexual couples by federal, state, and local governments and by both large and small corporations. Following Rabbi Schindler's call, the UAHC, in 1993, resolved that full equality under the law for gay men and lesbians requires legal recognition of monogamous domestic gay and lesbian relationships.

In 1990, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) adopted a position paper encouraging rabbis and congregations to treat with respect and to integrate fully all Jews into the life of the community regardless of sexual orientation and acknowledging the need for continuing discussion regarding the religious status of monogamous domestic relationships between gay men or lesbians and the creation of special ceremonies. In April 1996, the CCAR adopted a resolution supporting the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the benefits of civil marriage.

In addition, the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism (CCRJ) has supported the extension of spousal benefits to same-sex partners in relationships which would be deemed "common law" marriages if the partners were heterosexual. The CCRJ also supported the 1996 amendments to the Canada *Human Rights Act* to add "sexual orientation" as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

In the years since first the UAHC and subsequently the CCAR gave their support for full equality for gay men and lesbians in congregational life, gay men and lesbians have increasingly come forward to participate in the life of Reform Judaism on national, regional, and local levels. No less than heterosexual couples, gay men or lesbians living in monogamous domestic relationships have demonstrated, like their counterparts, love for one another, compassion for the sick, and grief for the dead.

The UAHC has for decades provided moral leadership to the Jewish community and to our nation, recognizing our differences and diversity, but acknowledging that we are but one family, equal before God. In this spirit, the UAHC must now move more forcefully to support the monogamous domestic relationships of gay men and lesbians.

Legal recognition of monogamous domestic gay and lesbian relationships and congregational honoring of these couples will together provide these men and women and their families with dignity and self esteem.

In 1993, the UAHC General Assembly resolution called for recognition for Lesbian and Gay

relationships: A) by governmental legislation as to participation in health plans and survivor benefits, as to fitness to raise children, and as to legal acknowledgment of the relationship; and B) by congregations and institutions of the Reform movement to extend benefits to partners of staff members and employees.

A separate secular movement is proceeding to recognize these monogamous domestic relationships judicially and statutorily and to grant to gay and lesbian couples nondiscriminatory economic, legal, and social rights equal to those under law enjoyed by monogamous heterosexual couples.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. Support secular efforts to promote legislation which would provide through civil marriage equal opportunity for gay men and lesbians;
2. Encourage its constituent congregations to honor monogamous domestic relationships formed by gay men or lesbians; and
3. Support the efforts of the CCAR in its ongoing work as it studies the appropriateness of religious ceremonies for use in a celebration of commitment recognizing a monogamous domestic relationship between two Jewish gay men or two Jewish lesbians.



[Back to the adopted resolutions page](#)

[Back to The Biennial home page](#)



*Copyright © 1997, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Most recent update 19 Nov 1997*



Search ccarnet.org:

Or Search the Reform Wel

About Us Conta

Resolution Adopted by the CCAR

ON GAY AND LESBIAN MARRIAGE

Adopted by the 107th Annual Convention of the
Central Conference of American Rabbis
March, 1996

Background:

Consistent with our Jewish commitment to the fundamental principle that we are all created in the divine image, the Reform Movement has "been in the vanguard of the support for the full recognition of equality for lesbian and gay people in society." In 1977, the CCAR adopted a resolution encouraging legislation which decriminalizes homosexual acts between consenting adults, and prohibits discrimination against them as persons, followed by its adoption in 1990 of a substantial position paper on homosexuality and the rabbinate. Then, in 1993, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations observed that "committed lesbian and gay couples are denied the benefits routinely accorded to married heterosexual couples." The UAHC resolved that full equality under the law for lesbian and gay people requires legal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships.

In light of this background,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis support the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage, and

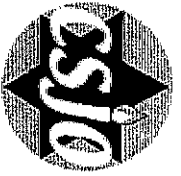
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CCAR oppose governmental efforts to ban gay and lesbian marriage,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this is a matter of civil law, and is separate from the question of rabbinic officiation at such marriages.



© 2005 Central Conference of American Rabbis
355 Lexington Avenue | New York, NY 10017 | (212) 972-3636 | info@ccarnet.org

For questions or comments about this site email the webmaster: webmaster@ccarnet.org



Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations

Social Action Resolutions

- Home
- About
- Social Action
- Events
- Resources
- Publications
- Affiliate Groups
- Employment
- Scholarships
- Essays
- Newsletter
- Contact
- Join CSJO

National Health Insurance and Medicare (NEW - 2005)	Statement on U.S. War in Iraq (NEW - 2005)
Diverse Coalition Issues Unity Statement and Call to Action on Sudan (NEW - 2005)	Same-Sex Marriages (NEW - 2005)
Administrative Policies	National Health Care
Boycott of California Table Grapes	Refugee Policy and Immigration
Children At Risk	Separation of Church and State
Corporate Corruption	Sexual Orientation
Environmental Issues	Social Justice and Affirmative Action
Iraq	Yugoslavia
Middle East Peace Process	No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act

National Health Insurance and Medicare

The Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, CSJO, consisting of affiliate groups in the United States and Canada holds that the Medicare program is an expression of CSJO's vision of what government can and should do for people. It is a tool for social justice. Today there are millions of people in the United States under 65 who do not have health insurance. Before the passage of Medicare in 1965, approximately half of all people over 65 did not have health insurance, either because it was too expensive or it was not available at any price from private insurers. However, as a result of Medicare, once we turn 65 we no longer have to worry about health insurance for doctor and hospital care.

While there are significant gaps in Medicare, particularly its failure to cover the costs of long term care, CSJO believes that the structure of the program is the right model on which to build a universal health care system that

hold accountable those who led us into this debacle. No matter what the outcome, a war based on false premises is not good for America and democratic values throughout the world.

[Back](#)

Same-Sex Marriages

The Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, CSJO, consisting of affiliate groups in the United States and Canada affirms its support for legal recognition of same-sex marriages. We call for an end to all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and for the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.

We join other progressive movements in Jewish life at the forefront of the three decade long struggle to affirm gay and lesbian (and bisexual and transgendered) identities and affirmatively seek to include gay and lesbian Jews in our institutions and communities. This solidarity is based on our own long historical experience as abused outsiders; as conversos or hidden Jews, forced into a closet to preserve our lives; as a people who saw gay men wearing the pink triangle and suffering persecution in Nazi concentration camps. Our history reinforces our moral imperative to offer our solidarity to all minorities subjected to discrimination and violence.

As Secular and Cultural Jews, we are particularly aware of the hypocrisy of religiously-based opposition to same-sex marriages. Those who quote the book of Leviticus to condemn homosexuality are playing a game of highly selective religious observance, insofar as there are scores of other prohibitions and punishments in Leviticus that they ignore. We therefore urge religious activists in the Jewish community and beyond, to find within their traditions the teachings of tolerance and acceptance and counterpose these to the dehumanizing preachings of the religious right.

Fear and hatred of homosexuals is, thankfully, diminishing in American life as we expand our notions of who is entitled to basic human rights. The American psychiatric establishment removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973. The Supreme Court decriminalized gay sex by rejecting as unconstitutional all state sodomy laws in 2003.

And while it is part of the democratic process to mobilize religious principles in support of, or opposition to, government policies, the right of all people to seek "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" — not Leviticus 20:13

or any other biblical passage - is what we hold sacred as America's creed. We are confident, therefore, that we will see the right of gay and lesbian Americans to marry their beloved ones established soon and in our own time, just as we saw the right of interracial couples to marry established in the last generation. We pledge ourselves to participate in the struggles to bring about this fulfillment of the U.S. Constitution.

Back

Administrative Policies

Since the beginning of the Bush Administration, we have seen a dramatic shift in governmental priorities. There seems to be a concerted effort by the Administration and its allies in Congress to put the burden of these new priorities on the backs of the working and middle class stata pf society. Evidence for these statements comes from the following facts: the deep dramatic cuts in taxes which have been, in the main, for the benefit of the wealthy corporate segments of society, segments of Congress are trying to make these cuts permanent, and we now hear that the government expects a deficit of 100 billion dollars despite the earlier warnings that the tax cuts would be disastrous. At the same time, the government is increasing, by many billions of dollars, the funds for the military, the war on terrorism, the Intelligence Budget, waiving loans to countries that support our policies, etc. In the meantime, the Bush Administration and its allies in Congress are attempting to use Social Security funds, are already reducing the coverage of Medicare, raising the cuts in social security supports, have already dismantled the Welfare system, refuse to provide funds for job training and jobs, reduced federal support for the education of our children, cut federal loans to students in the Universities, and are doing nothing for the 44 million Americans who have no medical coverage at all. We have also seen the passage of legislation that actually (not possibly) infringes on our rights under the Bill of Rights, and an inhumane policy on war detainees. The Administration's priorities are shifting the burden for funding of social needs onto the states, many of which are deeply in debt, barely covering their budget, and are generally overtaxed.

We, the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO), consisting of organizations and affiliates all over the United States and Canada, urge you, in the strongest terms, to abandon these priorities and return to those of social compassion and caring, i.e., reestablish and strengthen programs that deal with the needs of the American people. We need to reinstate the taxes that return to the judicial and legal system that was established in the Constitution, and use the principles underlying them for protecting the rights of all people under our jurisdiction. The new priorities and policies do not show us or the world that we are a compassionate caring nation.