



## **New Jersey Supreme Court Marriage Ruling Recognized as a Step Forward**

### **Decision Sure to Be Exploited for Partisan Gain**

October 25, 2006

The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** recognizes as a step forward today's unanimous New Jersey Supreme Court decision holding that denying rights and benefits to same-sex couples that are statutorily given to heterosexual couples violates the state's constitution. Three justices voted to end marriage discrimination immediately; all seven of the justices said that same-sex couples must be given all the rights and protections of marriage. The decision gives the New Jersey Legislature 180 days to either amend the state's marriage laws to include same-sex couples or to create some other statutory structure that will extend the same rights, benefits and obligations borne by married couples.

#### **Statement by Matt Foreman, Executive Director National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**

"Today's unanimous New Jersey Supreme Court ruling recognizes the equal needs of same-sex couples and their families. It is now up to the Legislature to implement the court's decision by amending the state's marriage laws to include same-sex couples; nothing less will suffice. We look forward to working with Garden State Equality to make that happen.

"Sadly, we know that politicians on the right and their allies in the anti-gay industry will do everything in their power to exploit this decision for political gain on November 7. Again they will denounce 'activist judges' and defame gay people and our families to inflame their base. Again they will use us to try to distract voters from the war in Iraq and failures in education, energy and health care. Again they will resort to lies, myths and fearmongering to promote more discriminatory, anti-family state constitutional amendments.

"Beyond being utterly predictable, these shameless tactics are wedge politics at their worst and a sure sign of desperation. We are confident the vast majority of voters will see them for what they are -- reprehensible -- and reject them.

"On behalf of our national community, we express our profound gratitude to Lambda Legal for its outstanding legal advocacy, to the plaintiffs in the case for their courage and determination, and to Steven Goldstein and Garden State Equality for their extraordinary work on behalf of marriage equality."