

Online extra: Gays, allies react to CA Supreme Court ruling

May 15, 2008

Reaction to today's (Thursday, May 15) California Supreme Court ruling that overturned the state's ban on same-sex marriage was swift. LGBT political leaders, human rights groups, and allied organizations all sent out statements, along with one from an anti-gay group. Below is a compilation of statements that were sent.

"We are witnesses of history today in California and I applaud the Supreme Court's ruling on the right of gay and lesbians to marry. It is a great step forward to equality for all Californians. It's a day to celebrate." – State Senator Christine Kehoe (D-San Diego)

"I welcome the California Supreme Court's historic decision. I have long fought against discrimination and believe that the state constitution provides for equal treatment for all of California's citizens and families, which today's decision recognizes." – House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco)

"We thank God that our prayers have been answered! This is a battle that our church, the Metropolitan Community Churches, has fought since I performed the first public same-sex wedding ceremony in the United States – in Huntington Park, California, in 1969. Today we both give honor to God for this victory." – The Reverend Troy Perry, founder of MCC and a plaintiff in the marriage case

"As former executive director of the Asian Law Caucus and a long-term civil rights advocate, I am thrilled that the California Supreme Court decided today to overrule the same-sex marriage ban. This decision will have a tremendously positive impact on same-sex couples and their families not only in California but across the globe.

The Recorder's Office, responsible for recording marriage licenses and issuing certified copies of the licenses, is honored to perform this duty for all same-sex couples who marry in San Francisco. We are prepared to be fully staffed to accommodate a potential influx of new same-sex marriages in the near future. We welcome back everyone who got married in the historic ceremonies four years ago and look forward to handing out certified copies of those marriage licenses to couples who request them." – Phil Ting, Assessor-Recorder, City of San Francisco

"California has a history of leading the nation on important issues and this ruling is certainly in keeping with that history. I applaud the ruling which makes it clear that the state constitution provides the same rights and protections for everyone." –Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-Oakland)

"Like many Californians, I am thrilled by this morning's decision by the California Supreme Court to overturn the ban on same sex marriage. This is a historic day for the state of California and for the tens of thousands of gay and lesbian couples whose love for each other is just as real as that of any other couple. Although today's ruling is significant, we still face challenges ahead. So, while we are jubilant in the wake of this news, we must also remain committed to ensuring that today's court decision becomes a reality." – Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-Santa Rosa)

I congratulate California's Supreme Court for recognizing that all of California's citizens are entitled to basic civil rights; and I can assure the people of the state that the result of this decision will be to improve the quality of life of tens of thousands of Californians who will now be able

legally to express their love for each other, while having no negative effect whatsoever on the overwhelming majority of Californians who will choose not to marry someone of the same sex." – Congressman Barney Frank (D-Massachusetts)

"Today is a historic day for civil rights in California. The court has fulfilled its responsibility in ensuring the equality of all Californians under the law. I stand with elected officials from cities and counties across the state in applauding the court for ruling that in the state of California, couples, regardless of sexual orientation, cannot be denied the right to marry." – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo

"I welcome the court's decision, because it is time for our laws to recognize that all households, same-sex or otherwise, contribute to the success and the greatness of California." – California Controller John Chiang

"Clearly, today is a day to celebrate. Two people in a committed and trusting relationship deserve the opportunity for dignity and support that come with marriage. But we must also stay focused on the struggle to maintain the rights that have now been validated by the state Supreme Court. The momentum generated today will be needed to stop the ballot measure that may be on this November's ballot." – Assemblyman John Laird (D-Santa Cruz)

"Today our state's supreme court reaffirmed the highest ideals of our republic. I am proud to be a Californian today as we stand on the right side of history. This is a victory for all people committed to equal justice and equal opportunity." – State Senator Leland Yee (D-San Francisco)

"In the Legislature we twice passed marriage equality bills, so I am obviously pleased to see this ruling by the California Supreme Court recognizing and respecting the rights of all Californians. The plaintiffs and their supporters in this case deserve our congratulations and our thanks for advancing the cause of civil rights. On a personal level, it is the biggest victory for love and persistence I have seen since I convinced my wife to marry me the second time." – Assembly Speaker Emeritus Fabian Nunez (D-Los Angeles)

"Today we move closer to living out the spirit of our nation's creed that all people are created equal. My heart goes out to the men and women who can now live out their lives in dignity with their loved ones with equal rights under the law." – Assemblywoman Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa)

"While today's ruling is historic, the fight continues. We must all work together to defeat the November ballot measure that would define marriage as only between a man and a woman and overturn this court decision. I look forward to defeating that measure and providing gay couples in California the same basic, civil rights that heterosexual couples now enjoy." – Former Marin Assemblyman Joe Nation

"We all owe Mayor Gavin Newsom a debt of gratitude for his visionary leadership on this crucial civil rights issue, along with the courageous plaintiffs in this case. But our march for justice and equality is far from over. We now must re-focus our efforts on fighting the divisive and discriminatory proposed constitutional amendment that would take away marriage equality for same-sex couples." – Art Torres, chairman, California Democratic Party

"The Supreme Court of California today took a step forward in the long march toward protecting equal rights under the law for every American. This should not be a matter of politics or partisanship; it is a matter of protecting the rights and dignity of all American families." – Howard Dean, chair, Democratic National Committee

"Today's ruling ensures that all families, regardless of gender, will be respected. We are so proud of our friends at the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and their partners, for achieving this incredibly victory for our communities." – Masen Davis, executive director, Transgender Law Center.

"Well, now the Supreme Court has spoken, and it has declared that same-sex couples do indeed have the right to marry in California." – Shirin Buckman, chair, the Lambda Letters Project

"Stonewall Democrats welcomes the ruling of the California Supreme Court to legally recognize the freedom to marry. California voters have twice supported this position through their elected officials." – Jon Hoadley, executive director, Stonewall Democrats

"This is an extraordinary victory for Californians and all Americans who hold fairness and opportunity as fundamental American values. Today, once again, California is leading the way in affirming the inherent dignity of all people. Today, in our hearts, we are all Californians." – Rea Carey, acting executive director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

"The California Supreme Court has made clear that same-sex couples in committed relationships and their families deserve the same level of respect afforded to opposite-sex couples. The court did its job by ensuring that the state constitution provides the same rights and protections for everyone. This is a decision that strengthens California families." – Joe Solmonese, president, Human Rights Campaign

"This ruling is a conservative one. The justices have ensured that the law treats all Californians fairly and equally. This decision is a good one for all families – gay and non-gay. Two people in a loving and committed relationship deserve the support and dignity that come with marriage." – Patrick Sammon, president, Log Cabin Republicans

"Congratulations California! Like Massachusetts, your courts and legislature have seen the humanity gay people share in common with others. Get ready for an outbreak of happiness as committed couples finally share in the dignity and security that marriage brings. Today's landmark ruling – which affirms the legislative majority – marks a moment in history that will be remembered more like the crest of a wave than simply another ripple." – Mary L. Bonauto, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders civil rights project director. Bonauto who argued and won *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, the lawsuit that made Massachusetts the first state with equal marriage.

"Some say that the California Supreme Court just ruled favor of 'gay marriage,' but it is so much more than that: They have affirmed the right that each of us has the freedom to marry the person we love, regardless of their race, their religion, their social class or the gender of the person they choose to spend their life with. Many who wish to enter into a same-sex marriage do not identify as 'gay' and will benefit from this decision." – Denise Penn, director, American Institute of Bisexuality

"Today's ruling affirms that committed couples, gay and straight, should not be denied the duties, obligations and protections of marriage," – Neil G. Giuliano, president, Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

"I rejoice today in the California Supreme Court's decision to end discrimination in the state's marriage laws. On behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Association, I thank the brave justices for honoring the spirit of the California Constitution and extending its protections to same-sex couples. Decades ago, California led the nation in affirming the right of interracial couples to marry, and it is fitting that the state now joins Massachusetts as a leader in full marriage equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender citizens." – The Reverend William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

"The California justices affirmed loud and clear that marriage should be based on a couple's love and commitment. Thousands of committed couples will be given the societal respect, recognition and legal protections that are provided only when two individuals become legally married. Yesterday, marriage in California was defined by who it excluded. Today, it's defined by who is included." – Selisse Berry, executive director, Out & Equal

"The California Supreme Court has engaged in the worst kind of judicial activism today, abandoning its role as an objective interpreter of the law and, instead, legislating from the bench," – Matt Barber, policy director for cultural issues, Concerned Women for America