

Targeted News Service

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Applauds Massachusetts House Repeal of Restrictive 1913 Marriage Law

July 29, 2009

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force applauds the Massachusetts House's 118-to-35 vote today to repeal a 1913 law that prevents Massachusetts from marrying out-of-state couples if their marriages would not be legal in their home states. On July 15, the state Senate voted to repeal the measure and Gov. Deval Patrick has said he will sign the repeal.

Statement by Rea Carey, Executive Director National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

"Massachusetts lawmakers wisely dismantled the barrier to same-sex couples from other states who wish to marry in the Commonwealth. We look forward to the signature of Governor Patrick on this legislation. The 1913 law, a shameful vestige from another wrong-headed time of denying marriage to interracial couples, became Gov. Mitt Romney's archaic tool in his unsuccessful bid to deny the freedom to marry to same-sex couples. Not only does today's House vote repudiate Romney's efforts to block our marriages in Massachusetts, it also invites couples from around the United States to experience the joy and happiness of celebrating their lives by becoming married in the Bay State.

"We applaud MassEquality, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, and the many others who worked so long and hard to achieve and protect marriage equality in Massachusetts."

Task Force commitment to marriage equality in Massachusetts

Since same-sex marriage became legal in Massachusetts on May 17, 2004, the Task Force Foundation and Task Force Action Fund have invested \$460,000 in the effort to secure and protect marriage equality in the Bay State. The Task Force has successfully worked with MassEquality to educate voters about the importance of marriage equality and to repeatedly keep an anti-same-sex marriage measure off the ballot. Our work has included:

- * Organizational representation on the founding board of directors of MassEquality.org in January 2005.
- * Persuading select lawmakers in western Massachusetts to change their votes on a 2007 anti-marriage amendment.
- * Making direct cash grants to MassEquality.
- * Being the lead organizer in a dozen major door-to-door voter canvasses and in filling hundreds of phone-banking shifts.
- * Assigning staff to lobby the state Legislature.
- * Organizing and staffing programs to identify pro-equality voters in Massachusetts.