

THE HILL



Victory in Vermont!

By **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund Executive Director Rea Carey**
April 7th, 2009

Vermont is once again making history.

Nine years ago it did so when it became the first state to grant legal recognition of same-sex relationships through its civil unions law; today, it became the first state Legislature to pass and enact a marriage equality measure. This ruling marks another watershed moment in the struggle for full equality. No longer will same-sex couples have their relationships treated as less than equal by the state.

Indeed, it is a momentous day and significant turning point in the struggle for the equal treatment of same-sex couples' relationships. The enactment of this bill affirms that only marriage can provide the protections, dignity and respect that the institution bestows. This vote also recognizes that civil unions simply fall short in ensuring same-sex couples are treated equally under the law.

We salute the courage and commitment of the Vermont state legislative leadership in pursuing this measure's passage — even successfully overriding the governor's veto. Lawmakers rightly concluded that no loving committed couple should be denied marriage and the critical protections only marriage can provide. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Vermont Freedom to Marry for its hard work and tireless advocacy for the freedom to marry.

Today's action comes on the heels of Friday's Iowa Supreme Court ruling granting same-sex couples the freedom to marry — another incredible moment.

Whether it be through legislative action, as in Vermont, or via the courts, as in Iowa, our nation becomes a stronger, better place when equality prevails.