

Declaration of Religious Support

VERMONT DECLARATION OF RELIGIOUS SUPPORT FOR THE FREEDOM OF SAME-GENDER COUPLES TO MARRY

As religious people, clergy, and leaders, we commit ourselves to public action, visibility, and education to support the right and freedom of same-gender couples to participate in civil marriage. We oppose the application of sacred texts and religious traditions for the purpose of denying legal and social equity to same-gender couples.

We affirm the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that provides the right to freedom of religion. The State may not require religious groups to officiate at, or bless, same-gender marriages nor may it favor the convictions of one religious group over another to deny individuals their fundamental right to civil marriage. By the same token, a denial of civil recognition dishonors the religious convictions of those communities and clergy who do officiate at, and bless, same-gender marriages.

We recognize that a separate system that legally recognizes same-gender couples creates a harmful stigma for those we support and love in our community. Although civil union protections have remedied some of the financial and legal inequities, the denial to participate in the status of civil marriage is a social injustice that fractures our communities, harms those we love and sends a message of government sanctioned discrimination.

As religious people, clergy, and leaders, because marriage is a basic human right and an individual choice, we support full civil marriage for same-gender couples.

UPDATED April 2007

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