



## TALKING ABOUT MARRIAGE

*Marriage matters to gay and lesbian couples in similar ways that it matters to everyone. Gay and lesbian couples want to get married to make a lifetime commitment to the person they love and to protect their families.*

### **Marriage says “We are family” in a way that no other word does.**

- Marriage means love and commitment, caring for one another in sickness and in health, supporting and taking responsibility for each other, sharing joys, sorrow.
- Gay and lesbian couples may seem different from straight couples, but we share similar values - like the importance of family and helping out our neighbors; worries - like making ends meet or the possibility of losing a job; and hopes and dreams - like finding that special someone to grow old with, and standing in front of friends and family to make a lifetime commitment.

### **It’s as basic as the Golden Rule.**

- Treating others as one would want to be treated includes ending the exclusion of marriage for gay couples who are truly committed to each other.
- Most straight couples would never want someone telling them they couldn’t marry, and when they think about it, many say they wouldn’t want to deny what is such a special part of their lives to anyone else.

### **Marriage strengthens families. It gives couples the tools and the security to build a life together and to protect their families.**

- There have been attempts to create marriage-like relationship systems, but they don’t provide the same security and protections. In many states, same-sex couples who have domestic partnerships have been barred from a dying partner’s bedside, and denied the ability to say goodbye to the person they love. That just doesn’t happen when you’re married. Everyone knows what marriage means.

### **Allowing committed gay and lesbian couples to get married does not change the meaning of marriage.**

- All couples who marry in the United States must get a license for a civil marriage, usually at a courthouse or city hall. This is about making sure these civil marriages would also be available to same-sex couples.
- Civil marriage for gay couples does not affect religious marriages, religious institutions or clergy in any way. No religion would be forced to marry same-sex couples, or recognize same-sex marriages within the context of their religious beliefs.