

Faith In America

Don't Accept Bigotry As Religious Truth

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California Supreme Court rejects religion-based bigotry in giving gays and lesbian freedom to marry

"The architects of our federal and state Constitutions understood that widespread and deeply rooted prejudices may lead majoritarian institutions to deny fundamental freedoms to unpopular minority groups, and that the most effective remedy for this form of oppression is an independent judiciary charged with the solemn responsibility to interpret and enforce the constitutional provisions guaranteeing fundamental freedoms and equal protection. "

- California Supreme Court Justice Kennard's concurring opinion

Today, the California Supreme Court issued a decision to overturn a ban denying gays and lesbians the right to marry. It is a monumental and historic repudiation of religion-based bigotry and discrimination that Faith in America applauds.

"The California Supreme Court in its ruling demonstrated the value it places on families, and that means all families," Childers said.

Childers said that efforts to deny gays and lesbians the right to marry are most often lead by religious affiliated groups which contend that marriage and family are institutions defined by their particular religious beliefs and that their definition should be enshrined in law.

"The Court exercised its solemn responsibility today to rejected the deep-seated prejudice and bigotry in majoritarian religious institutions," Childers said. "The institutions of marriage and family should be encouraged to flourish within our society without interference by misguided religious views."

Childers said the California Supreme Court followed in the footsteps of other historic rulings that struck down bans on interracial marriage. That correlation was made evident in the amicus brief filed in the case by the Howard University School of Law Civil Rights Clinic which stated:

"The same arguments asserted by opponents of the right of same-sex couples to marry were also made to justify racial apartheid and the ban against interracial marriage."

The Howard University School of Law Civil Rights Clinic provided examples to illustrate the striking similarity in arguments used to ban interracial and same-sex couples from the freedom to marry.

For example, theological arguments and the Bible, even references in Leviticus, were used by opponents of marriage for interracial and same-sex couples. Assertions were made that relationships for interracial and same-sex couples were unnatural and purely sexual, not worthy of marriage and that children raised in such unions would be physically and psychologically harmed.

"There is nothing new about the arguments marshaled in opposition to same-sex marriage. The very same arguments were assembled against interracial marriage. As a society, we have rightly rejected these attempts to deny full human dignity to interracial couples and individuals," states the Howard University School of Law Civil Rights Clinic.

Today, the California Supreme court afforded human dignity to gay and lesbian couples and their families, Childers said.

Faith in America is a civil rights advocacy organization whose mission is to end legal and spiritual discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people in America and to gain full and equal rights for those citizens. Faith in America is the only national LGBT rights advocacy organization lead by a straight ally. Faith In America is not a religious organization but works to educate Americans about the harm caused by religion-based bigotry against GLBT individuals.