

Faith In America

Don't Accept Bigotry As Religious Truth

Brent Childers, Executive Director

Iowa Justices Quash Advance Of Religion-Based Bigotry And Prejudice Toward LGBT People

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Faith In America today expresses its immense and solemn gratitude to the Iowa Supreme Court in its affirmation this morning that constitutional equality must always trump religion-based bigotry and prejudice toward a minority group of people.

The ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court, with all six justices concurring, states that “civil marriage must be judged under our constitutional standards of equal protection and not under religious doctrines or the religious views of individuals.”

“Today, the freight train of religion-based bigotry that has raced unchecked across America for so long was brought to a dead stop in Iowa by a panel of judges who let the truth and wisdom of history guide their pursuit of justice and equality,” said Faith In America Founder Mitchell Gold.

Gold, who was interviewed Thursday by KASI Radio in Iowa, said the ruling lifts the horrendous burden of oppression off the shoulders of gay and lesbian citizens of Iowa, particular gay and lesbian youth.

Gold, who has been touring America with his book about the pain and trauma faced by gay youth from the oppressive hand of religion-based bigotry and prejudice, noted a reference in the ruling about the negative impact on gay youth.

The ruling noted that “school-yard bullies have psychologically ground children with apparently gay or lesbian sexual orientation in the cruel mortar and pestle of school-yard prejudice.”

Gold said the harmful impact on gay youth is crushing when they see a society in which reverent state constitutions are used to justify the attitude that they will always be judged inferior and equal.

“In its ruling, the Iowa Supreme Court looked to history as a source for truth, wisdom and justice,” Gold said. “In citing Iowa’s history of rejecting majoritarian prejudice against African-Americans and women, they found truth and wisdom in affirming that gay and lesbian citizens in Iowa should no longer fall prey to that same injustice.”

The ruling stated that the “framers of the Iowa Constitution knew, as did the drafters of the United States Constitution, that ‘times can blind us to certain truths and later generations can see that laws once thought necessary and proper in fact serve only to oppress,’ and as our constitution ‘endures, persons in every generation can invoke its principles in their own search for greater freedom’ and equality.”

Brent Childers, executive director of Faith In America, recalled a town hall meeting in Iowa that the organization held in May 2007, just months before the marriage ruling by District Court Robert Hanson which set the stage for the Supreme Court ruling today.

“I recall an older gentleman who stood up and stated that he wished certain anti-gay religious groups would apologize for the pain that he has suffered from being judged and condemned by those groups as unworthy, inferior and immoral,” Childers said.

“While it may take time for some religious groups to realize they are on the wrong side of history, the Iowa Supreme Court today in its ruling spoke directly to that man and so many others – saying that the oppression that comes from being treated inferior and unequal will no longer be permitted to exist along side the ideals contained within Iowa’s constitution.”