

SPECTRUM INSTITUTE

A Non-Profit Corporation Promoting Respect For Human Diversity

February 22, 1995
For Immediate Release

For further information,
Contact: Thomas F. Coleman

Gays Urged to Prepare for Political Backlash Against Same-Sex Marriage, and to Educate Politicians About Domestic Partnership Rights

A major legal and political battle will soon erupt in Congress and every state legislature in the nation. The question: if same-sex marriage is legalized in Hawaii next year, must other states and the federal government recognize such marriages as valid?

Even without the gay marriage debate taking front stage yet in the media -- which it no doubt will before the end of the year -- events are occurring that foretell of the pendulum swinging in a retrograde motion on the subject of gay rights. For example, the newly elected Attorney General of New York has decided to delete "sexual orientation" from a list of prohibited types of discrimination in his office, despite the fact that it has been on the list since 1980. Moving west, the State of Nebraska has decided to prohibit gays and lesbians from adopting children or becoming licensed foster parents in that state.

A political test on same-sex marriage occurred this month in South Dakota where the House of Representatives voted 54 to 13 to specifically prohibit same-sex marriages from being recognized legally in that state. If public opinion polls are any indicator, a similar landslide against gay marriage will occur in each state legislature in the nation when a vote is taken. The same will occur in Congress. The question is what other negative proposals will be swept into law with the vote against gay marriage.

When the debate occurs about legal recognition of gay and lesbian family relationships, the two extreme positions will be the loudest: those on the political left will push for same-sex marriage now, those on the right will oppose any legal recognition, preferring instead to have gay couples considered as strangers by the law. However, there is a middle position that may appeal to moderates: legal recognition of domestic partnerships as one of the many family forms in America, along with single parent families, stepfamilies, foster families, extended families, inter-faith and inter-ethnic families, etc.

Now is the time for interested organizations and individuals to become educated about the concept of domestic partnership and to explain that option to elected officials. Hopefully, when the dust settles, some politicians will do more than vote no on gay marriage. If they understand the concept, some liberals and moderates will begin to express support for domestic partnership rights.

Spectrum Institute, a nonprofit educational corporation, has two booklets available to readers. One explains how the Hawaii marriage case will affect other states, both legally and politically. The other focuses on domestic partnership rights, listing government and private employers that now offer such benefits. Copies of both publications are available from Spectrum Institute, P.O. Box 65756, Los Angeles, CA 90065.

SPECTRUM INSTITUTE

A Non-Profit Corporation Promoting Respect For Human Diversity

To: Interested Organizations

Re: Impending Backlash Over
Same-Sex Marriage

Thomas F. Coleman
Executive Director

Date: February 20, 1995

We are sending you the enclosed newsletter to give you notice of a major legal and political battle that will soon erupt in Congress and every state legislature in the nation.

Even without the gay marriage debate taking front stage yet in the media -- which it no doubt will before the end of the year -- events are occurring that foretell of the pendulum swinging in a retrograde motion on the subject of gay rights. Two articles appearing in the newspapers only this month are examples. First, the newly elected Attorney General of New York has decided to delete "sexual orientation" from a list of prohibited types of discrimination in his office, despite the fact that it has been on the list since 1980. Moving west, the State of Nebraska has decided to prohibit gays and lesbians from adopting children or becoming licensed foster parents in that state.

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If you would like to order more copies of the newsletter, please let us know. Also, we have a separate brochure on domestic partnership rights which is available upon request. Please inform us about what happens on this issue when it is debated in your community.

Yours truly,



THOMAS F. COLEMAN