



Equality California | eqca.org

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Statement by EQCA Executive Director Geoff Kors

SAN FRANCISCO – Today marks a landmark milestone in our collective efforts to achieve full equality for same-sex couples and their families in California. All Californians, including same-sex couples, want to realize their hopes and dreams and enjoy the honor, commitment and security that come only through marriage. We are arguing this case today because the time has come for California to end, once and for all, the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage. It is time to give loving and committed same-sex couples the dignity and respect they have long been denied simply because of whom they love.

Equality California and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), working hand in hand with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Lambda Legal, have worked diligently to expand California law to significantly improve the lives and freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, paving the way also to end bias against same-sex couples in California's marriage laws. Working with committed same-sex couples, like the plaintiffs in this case, and thousands of supporters and volunteers across the state, we are educating Californians about the realities of our lives and the challenges we must overcome to achieve what other families take for granted.

For 10 years, EQCA has worked with the Legislature, the courts, and at the grassroots level, to ensure that same-sex couples and their families are treated equally under California law. In 2003, California created a comprehensive domestic partner registry program. And twice – first in 2005 and again in 2007 – the California Legislature passed legislation granting same-sex couples the freedom to marry. EQCA was proud to sponsor all three of those groundbreaking bills. We are now at an historic turning point we have long been waiting for. In as little as 90 days from today, same-sex couples in California could have the legal right to marry.

It is a great honor for Equality California to be a plaintiff in the consolidated marriage cases. We are humbled to be represented by NCLR's Legal Director Shannon Minter and the other brilliant and talented attorneys from Lambda Legal, the ACLU, Heller Ehrman LLP, and the Law Office of David C. Codell. We expect that today's oral arguments will move us forward on the path toward full equality under the law for all Californians. We are confident that soon loving couples and families like Jewelle and Diane and Jeanne and Pali will live the happily ever after dream they truly desire and deserve.

Founded in 1998, Equality California celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2008, commemorating a decade of building a state of equality in California. EQCA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots-based, statewide advocacy organization whose mission is to achieve equality and civil rights of all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Californians. www.eqca.org