

Reconstructionist Statement on Same-Sex Marriage Bans

November 14, 2008

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA), the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF), and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) deplore the passage of Proposition 8 in California and similar discriminatory initiatives recently passed in Arizona, Florida, and Arkansas. We are saddened and deeply disturbed by the denial of fundamental human rights—to marry, to adopt and care for foster children—to thousands of gay and lesbian citizens across the United States. We are particularly dismayed by the passage of initiatives that have reversed previously recognized equality for same-sex unions.

Beginning in 1993, in a series of resolutions, the Reconstructionist movement has affirmed the holiness of commitments made by same-sex couples. Religious recognition of marriages does not confer the legal and civil rights and responsibilities bestowed by the state upon married couples. We recognize the right of every religious denomination to affirm its own definition of, and limitations upon, the sacred ritual of marriage. No member of the clergy should be compelled to sanctify any union that is contrary to his or her understanding of sacred text and tradition. But neither should any gay or lesbian citizen of the United States be denied the legal rights confirmed by civil marriage.

We call upon leaders of other faith communities who share the commitment to civic equality and to the separation of church and state in the realm of marriage to speak out against bans on same-sex marriage and discrimination against GLBT people in the realm of adoption and foster care. We look forward to the day when all states will grant equal access to the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage.

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