

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FULL MARRIAGE EQUALITY FOR ALL SAME-SEX COUPLES IN NEW YORK STATE

WHEREAS, the Troy City Council is strongly committed to the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, to the fair and equitable treatment for all citizens, and to full legal protections and benefits for all families; and

WHEREAS, the City of Troy, in 1979, became the first city in New York State to enact legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Troy has historically been at the forefront of the civil rights movement, especially equal rights for African-Americans and women, with notable individuals that include Rev. Henry Highland Granet (Liberty Street Presbyterian Church), Harriet Tubman (Underground Railroad), Charles Nalle (freed slave), Emma Willard (Troy Female Seminary, later renamed to Emma Willard School), and Olivia Slocum Sage (Russell Sage College); and

WHEREAS, New York State, and the city of Troy in particular, is comprised of many different types of families and cultures, including those who have lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members; and

WHEREAS, loving LGBT couples are denied equal access to civil marriage in the State of New York, and with it, the over 1,300 protections and responsibilities that government conveys to legally married couples; and

WHEREAS, honoring the freedom to marry for committed same-sex couples lifts them and any children they may have into an equal constitutional stature as families; and

WHEREAS, imposing a separate status of “civil unions” on committed same-sex couples would continue to foster a discriminatory, “separate but equal” status for same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, the privileged status denoted by the word “married” conveys a meaning of commitment that is universally understood in all areas of life, including at times of medical emergency, serious illness, familial relationships between parent and child, and financial decisions, while the phrase “civil unionized” diminishes these aspects of one's life; and

WHEREAS, jurisdictions surrounding New York, including Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and all Canadian provinces have already enacted laws that convey full marriage rights to same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, Governor Andrew Cuomo has made the legalization of same-sex marriage one of his top three legislative priorities for the 2011 legislative session; and

WHEREAS, a recent Siena College poll found that 58% of New Yorkers support same-sex marriage (the highest level of support ever seen), and a recent Troy Record poll found that 56% of readers responded “Let them wed” when asked “What are your feelings on same-sex marriage?”; and

WHEREAS, full marriage equality for committed same-sex couples will enhance the economic prosperity of New York by encouraging LGBT persons to settle here and invest in New York's economy, generating an estimated \$300+ million within the first three years of enactment; and

WHEREAS, a united and unified coalition of equality-minded groups that include the Empire State Pride Agenda, Freedom to Marry, the Human Rights Campaign, the Log Cabin Republicans, and Marriage Equality New York have joined together to form New Yorkers United for Marriage; and

WHEREAS, New Yorkers United for Marriage is engaged in the largest ever grassroots effort to promote full marriage equality for all New Yorkers, working closely with New York State legislators, and enlisting support and assistance from local municipalities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Troy does hereby support the equal right to marriage for all loving, committed same-sex couples; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council urges the New York State Legislature, including Troy's delegation of legislators, to advocate and vote for marriage equality legislation during this legislative session, and any subsequent sessions, until it is affirmed by a majority of the legislature; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we ask the Assembly Speaker and Senate Majority Leader to move marriage equality legislation to the floor of their respective chambers for a vote during this legislative session, and any subsequent sessions, until it is affirmed by a majority of the legislature and signed into law by the Governor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to our legislative representatives (Senator Roy McDonald, Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, and Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin), as well as Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senate Minority Leader John Sampson, and Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb.