

What is a civil union?

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



What is a Civil Union? The authors, Jess Henig and Lori Robertson, who wrote the essay “ What is a Civil Union? ” present three differences between civil unions and marriages as the rights to federal benefits, portability of civil unions, and terminology of marriage. Henig and Robertson introduce the essay with how state and federal laws regarding gay marriage differ in that states allowing civil unions extend state benefits to same-sex married couples however, The Defense of Marriage Act states that for all legal purposes marriage is a union between one man and one woman therefore, federal marriage benefits are not extended to same-sex married couples. States with legalized civil unions including Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Vermont allow same-sex married couples state benefits. The authors go on to describe the differences of state and federal benefits. These include that same-sex married couples are allowed to file a joint state tax return, but must file separate federal tax returns claiming themselves as single. Additionally, if one spouse works for a company whose health care is governed by the state laws that coverage is extended to the spouse, however if the company is governed by federal laws then it is up to the employer if they will extend health coverage to the same-sex spouse. In conclusion, if a spouse were to die, the survivor would have the right to Social Security payments based on the earnings of the married couple. Moving into the middle of the essay, the authors inform us that New Jersey is the only state that allows portability of civil unions meaning that the same-sex partnership is transferable to another civil union state. The controversial issues of the traditional views of marriage conclude the essay with an argument from adversaries including Jenny Tyree with Focus on the Family,

expressing that same-sex marriage discourages the traditional views of marriage as man, women, and children. Work Cited Henig, Jess, and Lori Robertson. " What is a Civil Union? " Everything's an Argument. Eds. Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruskiewicz. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. 243-48. Print.