

Gay rights in america

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The Gay Family in America " Each individual's journey through life is unique. Some will make this journey alone, others in loving relationships - maybe in marriage or other forms of commitment. We need to ponder our own choices and try to understand the choices of others. Love has many shapes and colors and is not finite. It cannot be measured or defined in terms of sexual orientation." (Same sex marriage and civil unions) America's population is growing, and the number of homosexuals is increasing as well. With the growing population of gays in America's communities growing closer to 10%, the topic of gay marriage comes up time and time again. There are always two sides to each battle, and each side feels strongly on their decided opinions. The gay population seems to feel more strongly on this battle. On November 18, 2003, Massachusetts legalized civil marriages. The Supreme Judicial Court ruled in a 4-3 favor that same sex couples can marry, saying that same- and opposite-sex couples must be given equal civil marriage rights under the state constitution. Massachusetts is the first state in the country to legalize gay marriage, but not the first place in the world. The Netherlands legalized gay marriage on April 1, 2001, being the first country in the world to do so. Belgium soon became the next country to legalize gay marriage, on January 30th, 2003.(Gay marriage in the Netherlands) In recent polls in Massachusetts, done by WBZ news and the Boston Globe, it has been found that 53% of the state population supports the court's decision. A second poll done by the Boston Herald shows that 49% of the population favors legalizing gay marriage. Polls also show that 44% oppose substituting gay marriage rights for civil unions, meaning people want to give the rights of marriage to same sex couples. Vermont is the only other state in the

United States that has anything along the lines of a partnership between same sex couples. On July 1, 2000, Vermont legalized civil unions.(Vermont Civil Unions) Up until the legalization of civil marriages in Massachusetts, civil unions were the deepest partnership shared between a same sex couple. Civil unions gave couples a handful of the rights a married heterosexual couple receives after getting married, but these rights are only accepted and acknowledged in the state of Vermont. Marriage is defined as the legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife. The Bible states that a man should not sleep or be in a relationship with another man. But as times change, society changes which leads to the changes in the world. At one point slavery was something that America agreed with, and saw African Americans as objects, not people. If times didn't change, slavery would still be tolerated in the United States, we would still be fighting the Civil War, fighting for equal rights. It seems that people take things for granted, and over look little things that mean so much to others. Society has over come so many obstacles already in the hundreds of years we have been here, and it will continue to overcome more as it proceed through life. Society gave women the right to vote in the 1920's, society saw that the separation of blacks and whites did nothing but create more problems, and society is slowly seeing that denying people of marriage based on sexual orientation is also a wrong doing. The fight for gay marriage is about those little things people over look. With civil unions, a couple is not entitled to make medical decisions for each other, they do not have legal status with their partner's children, they do not share insurance licenses, or insurance coverage, eligibility, and benefits organization of mutual benefits society. Exemption

from claims of Department of Human Services for social services payments, financial assistance, or burial payments, burial of service member's dependents, division of property after dissolution of marriage, accidental death benefit for the surviving spouse of a government employee, along with over 1000 other laws people are only capable of getting when married, are taken for granted. (Why make it legal?) All Americans pay and contribute to social security, but gay and lesbian families are not entitled to collecting their social security check when they are needed. If someone's significant other dies, and the living person cannot collect social security; that is a loss of around \$10, 000 a year (Why make it legal?) That is a substantial amount of money that could very easily alter the living styles of a person and their family. In the United States, 49 out of the 50 states allow gay individuals to adopt children, and 47 states allow same sex couples to adopt children. Adoption agencies are more willing to allow gay parents to adopt children. Almost 60% of adoption agencies will accept applications from openly gay couples (Most adoption firms allow gay parents) Gay couples are capable of raising a child just as well as a heterosexual couple. Raising a child the "right way" depends on the individual raising the child, not the individual's sexual orientation. Sex offenders, murderers, rapists, and abusive individuals are all capable of having children, but same sex couples are denied that privilege every day. Because a child is raised by a same sex couple, that does not mean that they too will be gay. A good parent is determined by his/her individual care with the child, and what they expose the child to, what they teach the child, and how the child reacts to it all. Many people say that without a father, a male child will be brought up differently. So what is

the case if a male child has two fathers? Is there too much masculinity there now? Or what if lesbians raised a child, is their child going to be different from any other because there is no father figure? If that is the case, then what happens when a single mother is raising her child by herself, does she suddenly become an unfit parent as well? If members of the same sex wish to get married and adopt a child, there will be two loving parents there with the child, just like there would be if the child was raised in a heterosexual family. Same sex couples go through life with fear, lack of understanding, anger, and sometimes hatred. People fear what they do not understand, and many people do not understand the concept of loving someone of the same sex. Love is defined as " a deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection and solicitude toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness." No where in that definition does it say " between a man and a woman." If people are capable of loving others of the same sex just as easily as people of the opposite sex love each other, why hold them back from truly being joined in matrimony? 75% of grown adults in the United States are Christian (50% Protestant and 25% Catholic), but every year this number drops by a full percent. The percentage of adults attending religious service in America is slowly going down as well; at last count only 36% of religious Americans were attending church on a regular basis (How many faith groups are in the United States?) The religious aspect of the American life is slowly slipping, and with that the religious beliefs are slipping as well. As children grow up, they become more aware and more accepting of their surroundings, and less worried about what people will think and how others will react. Many teenagers of today's

society have some form of religious views, but alter them from what is considered the religious " norm". They believe in God, yes, but do not fully embrace Him in every aspect. As the world changes, times change and so do the views of the world. Without people being able to sit back and question the Bible, and question the view of God, there would be no room to grow. Sometimes in life it takes a large person to stand up and discuss their views and standpoints on things. The people who take a stand and fight for gay rights should be applauded. Times are changing, and the world is opening their eyes to a great deal of things. Every person leads a unique life, who are we to say who they can and cannot marry? This country was founded on freedoms and it's about time the people take advantage of what they were given. ### References US honors adoption groups, some pro-gay www.planetout.com/pno/splash/html. Survey: Most adoption firms allow gay parents <http://gay.com/news.article.html?2003/10/29/1> Same sex marriage and civil unions http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_marr.htm Why make it legal www.gay-civil-unions.com/html/why_make_it_legal.htm How many faith groups are there in the United States? http://www.religioustolerance.org/us_rel1.htm Gay marriage in the Netherlands <http://www.instepnews.com/gaymarriage.html> Vermont Civil Unions <http://www.lmaw.org/vermont.htm>