



Asians & Allies for Marriage Equality

A Coalition to Support Same-Sex Marriage organized by the
Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, the Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center,
Equality California/Marriage Equality California, and Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality

July 2004

Dear Friends,

We are writing to ask for your support on an important issue—marriage equality. We at GAPA, A&PI Wellness Center, EQCA/MECA and APACE believe that the right to marry for same-sex couples is a defining issue of our times.

- **Marriage is a Civil Right**

All over the country, millions of same-sex couples are living together in committed relationships, raising children, and creating stable, loving families. They are doing exactly what different-sex couples do, but with one important difference. Same-sex couples cannot marry.

Marriage is more than a symbolic institution. It is a legally recognized union entailing rights protected by federal and state laws. Without the right to marry, same-sex couples cannot make healthcare decisions for each other as spouses. They cannot inherit property as spouses or claim spousal benefits from social security. Because they cannot get married, same-sex couples are being deprived of important legal rights.

There is no reason whatsoever to deny marriage to same-sex couples other than bigotry, intolerance, and fear based on ignorance. This is a case of discrimination, plain and simple. We urge everyone who cares about civil rights, regardless of sexual orientation, to support marriage equality.

- **Why Asians?**

We are greatly concerned that certain ultra-conservative Asian churches are campaigning against marriage equality. For example, on April 25, 2004, there was an anti-marriage equality demonstration in San Francisco's Sunset district organized by a few Chinese-American churches that garnered significant media coverage.

We are deeply troubled that the media coverage of the misguided efforts of this small segment of the Asian community may be creating the public perception that all Asians are ultra-conservative, homophobic people. We at GAPA, A&PI Wellness Center, EQCA/MECA and APACE know this to be untrue.

Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) have a long history of fighting for civil rights (see Mabel Teng's op-ed piece dated March 16, 2004 in the San Francisco Chronicle). There are many



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progressive APA organizations and individuals who are leading the fight for civil rights on a daily basis, including civil rights for gay and lesbian people.

We are therefore taking steps to let the public know that the homophobic views expressed by a small, ultra-conservative segment do not represent the views of all or even a majority of APAs. We need to send the message to the public that there are many progressive APAs who support marriage equality as a civil right for gay and lesbian people.

- **We Need Your Support**

We ask that you show your support for marriage equality by doing the following:

1. Register your organization as an official member of ***Asians & Allies for Marriage Equality, A Coalition in Support of Same-Sex Marriage***. To become a member of the Coalition, please go to www.gapa.org and click on the ***Summer of Love 2004*** icon.
2. Organize a contingent to attend our rally ***Summer of Love 2004: A Celebration of Same-Sex Marriage***. The rally will be held on Sunday, August 8, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, at Larsen Park in San Francisco's Sunset district (19th Avenue between Ulloa and Wawona). It will be a day of celebration, information, entertainment, community building, and good cheer. We will provide you with flyers and email announcements to publicize the rally to your members and email list. To receive flyers and email announcements of the rally, please go to www.gapa.org and click on the ***Summer of Love 2004*** icon.
3. Make a contribution to help cover the cost of the rally and the on-going activities of the Coalition. Make your check out to **GAPA** and mail it to *P.O. 421884, San Francisco, CA 94142-1884* (please write "Marriage Equality" in the memo line of your check).

With deep gratitude,

Steering Committee of Asians & Allies for Marriage Equality

Robert Bernardo, Gary Chen, Wilson Fang, Evelyn Gee, CJ Jiang, Peter Kwan, Jennifer Lin, Chuin Phang, Felix Tsai, Andy Wong, Clarence Wong, David Yau, Diana Ming Yin