

# OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. - The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

## Point and Counterpoint: Gay Marriage

By Chris Brown  
copy editor

Same-sex marriage remains a very controversial issue in American society. Many opponents to same-sex marriage get incorrectly lumped into the category of ignorant, white, right-wing Christian fundamentalists that voted for George W. Bush. The only category that fits me is that I'm white (Gasp!). I don't think it is the right time for the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States. There just simply is not enough evidence on the subject to conclude that the results of legalization would be beneficial to society.

The main argument of proponents for same-sex marriage is that homosexual partners should be afforded the same benefits as heterosexual partners when they get married. It is widely known that the government gives out numerous tax benefits to married couples that are raising children. Justice Martha Sosman, Massachusetts State Supreme Court, notes in her dissenting opinion on a decision regarding same sex marriage that, "Many people are raising children outside the confines of traditional marriage, and, by definition, those children are being deprived of the various benefits that would flow if they were being raised in a household with married parents."

Does this mean that every couple, be they an unmarried heterosexual couple, single mother, or homosexual couple, receive the same benefits given to married couples raising a family? No. This is because there aren't any clear studies that indicate whether or not any of these aforementioned family structures are harmful to children and deserve sanction by the government.

Many studies do however point to the fact that a husband-wife family structure is beneficial to child rearing as Lynne Marie Kohm points out in an article in the *Journal of Contemporary Law*. She states, "Statistics continue to show that the most stable family for children to grow up in is that consisting of a father and a mother." The studies that do exist on children that were raised in a dual homosexual partner family are conclusive on the point that there is a marked difference between those families. On the other hand, they are inconclusive as to whether or not those differences are good, bad, or neutral



because many of the children studied have yet to reach adulthood due to this recent phenomena of same-sex marriage. I urge people to use this same precautionary principle that environmentalists use to protect plants and wildlife from construction. Society needs to concentrate on its most important assets: children and their future.

Marriage is an institution that exists outside of the confines of politics and government: it is pre-political in its nature and is something that society has shaped into existence over thousands of years. Jennifer Morse, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, writes, "Government does not create marriage anymore than it creates jobs...people instinctively create marriage." This instinct for the last few thousand years has told us that marriage is a union between a man and woman. Yes, there have been changes on marriage before but they occur slowly and with the tide of public opinion, which remains divided on this controversial issue. Maybe a different category of union could be created for homosexual couples just so nature's institution of marriage remains intact. However, I feel even this decision could be rash and detrimental to society without enough research.



Mike Sharkey/ THE BEHREND BEACON

By Ashley Bressler  
assistant news editor

The heavily debated issue of recognizing same-sex marriages in the United States has been increasingly popular in the past few years. The 2004 Presidential Election dealt with the issue on numerous occasions and the majority of Americans sided with President George W. Bush by saying the laws prohibiting same-sex marriages should not be abolished. What is America truly afraid of?

Are we afraid of another terrorist attack? No, because President Bush tells us not to worry. Are we afraid of the results from the war in the Middle East? No, President Bush tells us our troops will be home soon and he has reason to believe their presence in the Middle East is for the best of our nation. Are we afraid to allow homosexuals the right to wed? Yes, because President Bush tells us it is a sin. As a democratic nation, we choose the leader we will follow, but how far will we follow that leader?

In World War II, Germany followed the leader Adolf Hitler who wanted to make Germany the best nation in the world. He sent millions of Jews, blacks, gypsies and homosexuals to their death. Hitler also said that homosexuality is a sin, and Germany followed. All that racism got Hitler was cyanide in his stomach and a bullet in his head.

I do not think the issue of homosexuality can ever be discussed in the United States without the topic of religion coming up. Many individuals base their opinions about same-sex marriages and homosexuality solely on their religious views. "It's not God's will," or "the Bible says homosexuality is a

sin," some say. But isn't the basis for Christianity and most religions about love, compassion and faithfulness? The Bible teaches many important morals and says all sins are equal, but I wonder if the individuals who consider homosexuality to be a sin have ever told a lie, committed adultery, dishonored their mothers and fathers, or indulged in the many "sinful" pleasures in life? I also wonder if they have ever taken the time to actually open the Bible, studied its contents, and read it in its entirety. The Bible does however clearly state, God is love, so if marriage is the most obvious expression of love, then how can the bond between two people who are in love be wrong?

If the United States is supposed to be a land where all religions, including atheism, are accepted, then why is the American government basing its laws on "Christian" values? If our government says that marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman, based on the teaching of the Bible, a book of Christian teachings, then why do they not follow the Christian laws about divorce? It is an unfair and unequal law, one which should not be examined according to the sex of a couple. If there should be any laws around the issue of marriage, it should deal with how compatible the individuals are for one another.

Is it really fair that two intoxicated, heterosexual people who have known each other for a mere 24 hours can legally be married, yet two self-respecting homosexuals who have been in a committed relationship for more than 30 years cannot? I don't think so. Again, what is America afraid of?

According to the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, there are only a handful of states who currently allow same-sex couples to be married, but the majority of them still do not receive their full benefits. Of the pro-same-sex marriage states, Hawaii "offers domestic partnership benefits to employees. The legislation gives same-sex couples the broadest package of rights and benefits ever accorded gay families in the United States." Rhode Island which, "entitles same-sex couples to wed, and offers domestic partner benefits to employees, but not a registry."

As a heterosexual woman, I feel neither threatened nor afraid of what could result from allowing same-sex couples the same marital rights and privileges as every law-abiding heterosexual couple. I do however have concerns and fears about the escalating divorce rates among heterosexuals.

Clearly, we are not so good at whole marriage deal, so why not give someone else a stab at it? Just as there are many heterosexual couples who choose not to wed for personal, financial, or religious reasons, homosexuals should have the same choices. They are not animals to be dragged from the back of a pick-up truck and they are not evil to be shunned from the houses of religion. They are our school teachers, doctors, town leaders, waitresses, business owners, actors and actresses, neighbors, mothers/fathers, friends and our equals. Same-sex couples deserve to experience the joy of a wedding day, proclaim their devotion in front of their friends and family, live together for the rest of their lives, raise successful children, and benefit from the same marital privileges as every other citizen in this kaleidoscope of a country that is America.

## The Behrend Beacon

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### Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to [klk5005@psu.edu](mailto:klk5005@psu.edu) or directly to the Beacon office, located in the Reed Building.

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run the submission.

All submissions must include the writer's year in school, major and name as The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue. All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication.

### Beacon Thumbs Up



- New holiday flavors at Starbucks
- Birkenstocks
- Pizza Hut lunch buffet
- New blinds in REDC
- Sun!!

### Beacon Thumbs Down



- Wearing mini-skirts in November
- Bad TV reception in classrooms
- Automatically flushing toilets
- Still no clocks in REDC
- Parking tickets



Have a Thumbs Up or  
Thumbs Down?

(check a box )




Submit it to the "Thumbs up-Thumbs Down" box at the RUB desk.