

TESTIMONY FOR Judiciary Committee Hearing on LD 1020
State of Maine Legislature

Members of the Judiciary Committee: I am Henry E. Warren from Cape Elizabeth and I am an ordained interfaith minister with particular interests in hospice and care for the elderly. But today I want to express my support for LD 1020 for two reasons, and I will be brief.

First, my son is gay and I have supported him in his growth over the years, beginning with his discovery as a gay man, and then his acceptance and pride in being able to live his personal and professional life with integrity. He now lives in California and he and his partner of seven years were thrilled to celebrate that state's court ruling that same gender marriage was authorized by the California constitution. They did it by celebrating their love and hopes for their future together in a wonderful wedding ceremony last October, before the voter referendum passed. The future impact of that passage remains within the court to this day, and my son and his partner wait to learn whether their marriage will remain valid in the eyes of the law. In their eyes, and mine, it will always be valid.

What is equally important, however, is that David and his partner wanted to go beyond the extensive legal rights they had enjoyed for years through an authorized civil union, and be recognized as fully committed, fully equal married persons in the eyes of their peers and society. And I, for one, have heard no reasonable argument to refute their right to have that recognition. I have heard of religious reasons, and believe they have no place in a discussion about a legal process required by the state. I have heard of threats to the institution of marriage, an interesting argument in a country where half of all marriages end in divorce. And I have heard of threats to the proper raising of children, also interesting in a country where at least a quarter of children are raised in single parent homes.

Regardless of the intentions of these various arguments against same gender marriage, the real truth is that equal rights demand that two consenting adults be able to choose their own partners and have the state acknowledge their legal commitment and need for the full benefits and obligations that acknowledgement requires. If churches choose not to bless such a marriage, or an adoption policy is designed to prohibit such a couple from adopting and providing a loving home for a child that is sad and also bad policy. But these are not the issue here. The issue is simple equal rights to marriage recognition by the state for all couples, regardless of gender.

Please vote YES on LD 1020. And thank you.

Rev. Henry E. Warren