

October 2, 2009

I am a straight 71-year-old grandma who just doesn't get the fight against gay marriage. I have enjoyed the benefits (and burdens) of being married nearly 50 years. For 90 percent of us it's been easy. Fall in love, get a license, find a religious or lay official to say the magic words and ba-da-boom! For better or worse.

So why can't the gay community enjoy the same process guaranteed them by the Fourteenth Amendment? Who does it hurt? What does it cost? Why deny anyone the right to a legal life together? Thus, wise lawmakers of Maine recognized that all of its residents deserved equal civil rights to marriage.

There is no basis in fact or fairness to deny these rights. When religion cannot be used as a defense because of the prudent church and state separation, opponents resort to making stuff up to maximize baseless fear and rage among the homophobic. Kids cannot be hurt learning equal rights but can be irreparably harmed and permanently tainted by parents preaching prejudice and hate.

My Maine neighbors are good people. If their family members were attacked for being different, they'd fight hard for lawful rights for their own. Gay Americans are our own. Neighbors, friends, family, co-workers are 10 percent of us. No vote against them will change that fact. Every voter who opposes gay marriage must ask themselves what they would do if it was their child or good friend who was denied the right to marry a loved one.

It's almost 2010. How many more decades and lives do we have to waste before we can all reject intolerance and embrace human rights?

Carol Selsberg

Eliot