

.... With Liberty and Justice for All....

The Constitution of the United States of America is based on the premise that ~~A~~all men are created equal~~@~~ and should be given equal rights in the pursuit of happiness. Despite this very basic tenet of truth and foundation for this Country, we have a history over disputes for equal rights. The Black, the Indian, the Oriental, other foreigners, women, and now homosexuals. The cry of each has been the same - Equal opportunity in employment, education, religion (personal beliefs), family, economic growth or failure upon their own actions and not of others actions against them. Why is it so hard for the *majority* to let go of their ~~A~~power~~@~~ over others by truly allowing everyone the same choices and freedoms they have? We have come a long way since the days of Colonial America, or so it would seem. However, our advances seem partial and superficial at best when it becomes apparent through our continual struggle with equality - freedom of choice/agency - for all, that we have yet to truly comprehend what it means to give everyone, despite our differences of opinion, the same full rights as any other ~~A~~worthy~~@~~ male/female/person. Today the loudest cry for equality comes from the homosexual population. How long will it take and how many sacrifices must be made to have this cry realized? Will the time it takes reflect our progress of understanding equality and free agency for all, or will it reflect the obstinance and ignorance of mankind in general? I pray the choice you will make will reflect the former rather than the latter.

Because of recent events, I have found myself compelled to write this letter to rally support toward a reawakening of the peoples understanding of their own constitutional rights. These rights should be protected by the social orders, governments, and each individual. These rights are that everyone is to be free to act upon their own conscience and desires as long as it does not infringe upon the rights of others. These rights spelled out so well in the Constitution, the original Bill of Rights, and previously mentioned in the prologue are: freedom of speech, religion, opportunity, education, growth, life, and the pursuit of happiness.

I find it ironic however that religion has been and is still the cause of much strife, persecution, and wrongful judgement upon others. Early on (though by no means the earliest example) the Catholic church's installment into the political arena caused wars, heartache, inhumanity in the name of God, and the infringement of the rights of others to believe as they would. In early colonial America, religious disputes became very heated and the results were the birth of many more religions including the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints a.k.a. ~~A~~Mormons~~@~~ (of which I am a member). In other countries around the world, some of which the United States has involved themselves in, many wars are/were based in religious intolerance and bigotry.

Now do not misunderstand me, I am a very spiritual person. My present inactivity in the church of my upbringing stems from their intolerance of my social class/lifestyle, not my belief in their basic tenets. Such tenets as one of the greatest two commandments or necessities of man is to learn to love each other as they would love themselves. That mankind is on this earth to have and use free agency to learn to grow and be happy as they face the natural consequences of their choices. (Natural meaning coming without man's intervention.) Keep in mind that my standing with my own religion is a side point, and must be known only for perspective of the author.

It is common knowledge that the boundaries between church and state in this country have become less defined than they may or may not have previously been. Our government has found it increasingly necessary to redefine some of such by regulating some school practices. For example, it is no longer a legal practice to hold a group prayer during graduation. However I feel that real nature of my complaint is of a somewhat more extreme definition regarding the rights which many have taken for granted.

In the past few years, it has been common knowledge that many religious organizations have given money to certain political organizations to push into place laws that further a religious infiltration into our system of law. The most apparent are the Christian Coalition which lost its political seat in government and tax-exempt status almost too late, and now the AMormon@church with its direct contributions to anti-gay marriage laws of \$1.1 million in the states of Hawaii and Alaska and the directive to all its California members to use all of their expendable resources (money and time) to the anti-gay marriage laws presently being under vote.

The particular push now is against gay marriage. There are many sides to this complex issue. It has been argued that gay marriage should be determined by the religion itself as that marriage is a religious ordinance. My argument is that they would be right in so thinking was marriage not also respected by all local and national law giving benefits under all work environments to an unemployed spouse regarding health, dental, vision, medical, accidental death and dismemberment, and life insurance as well as the availability of tax deductions under the law as the unemployed party being considered a dependent in such cases. And of course let's not forget legal rights of heir and hospitalization rights afforded spouses. Therefore marriage is definitely intermingled with state affairs, and is no longer singular to religious denominations.

Another commonly argued point of law is that Gay and Lesbian individuals are not part of a minority group, because unlike other minority groups, the determination is not made by skin color nationality or religion, they are part of all of the above. The argument to that is gay and lesbian individuals mark a 6% to 10% ratio across the country and thus can be listed as a minority group by numbers alone. Into this equation I would add that Gays and Lesbians have marked a group within the human race for longer than most religions and nations, if not all religions and nations. In fact as long as any race of humans have existed on this planet. However why is being a minority raised as a question? What about equality for *all*?

It might be argued that Gays and Lesbians do not qualify because their sexuality is something they chose, But my argument stands with countless individuals who proclaim that they were not recruited, nor did they choose the lifestyle, but were driven to it from day one by their own natural internal instincts. If you would ask them you may be surprised to find out how many would gladly choose to be heterosexual just so that their life would be easier. I would argue that if such a decision could be made and be made so simply many men and women who are very heterosexual could likewise be placed in a position where they were asked/forced to deny instinctual attraction for the opposite sex, and thus deny their natural and inborn drives as things of naught, that can be tossed to the wind at any moment, would

not be able to do so. This slaps obvious incongruity. Neither can men and women who find their natural and inborn drives towards same sex deny their internal feelings. Gays and Lesbians are a group within the human race, and will not disappear. I believe they deserve the same rights as all others, if not religiously then at least within the system of government, and law. Again, why is choice even a question as to equal rights? What of free agency and equality for *all*?

Many have argued that Gay and Lesbian behavior have always been *Wrong*. My argument is based in history being that such ideals came directly from an era when national and religious leaders were the same people, and the laws were written by the churches to protect what they deemed to be a *Good* citizen. This is one of the things our own country has written our constitution to protect us from, yet it has not hindered our country's throng of religions from declaring their law as though it were the legal and written law of the nations, and furthermore, from giving millions of untaxed dollars to organizations they head and helped organize, with means in mind of diminishing the personal freedom of 10% or more of our nation's populace. If allowed to continue, they will use it as an opportunity to declare to the world their power above and beyond the governments to pursue and eliminate what they term sinful, and even abominable.

But do the religions stop to think that to force a person to follow what they believe in is much like unto the evil one that their religion warns against? Would God (whoever/whatever he/she/it may be) force us to one will? Of course not, for we are not, nor should anyone take upon themselves that *privilege* of deciding for another what is right. This of course deals with moral issues and still falls right in line with what the Constitution in writing and voice has determined as self-evident inalienable rights.

I feel that it is abominable that any organization would use money, especially untaxed dollars, to buy votes toward their own empowerment over any group of people, and further more sinful to take advantage of their tax-free status by using religious money toward a non-religious and blatantly political end.

For those of you who believe that because you are not gay or lesbian this does not affect you, please reconsider. Although this may be taken as pure speculation by many, it is logic, and has been proven in history time and time again. When and if religious power gets strong enough to begin eliminating the rights of one group of subjects, being the lowly *Sinners*, those who pervert the ways of righteousness. It is never long before one denomination will take up the axe against another, whether the axe is made of fancy words written on a parchment or is actual uprising, on the grounds that *None* is the only true religion, and the others cannot be. When religion has had its way within government, the ends have been repeatedly proven that civil wars immediately follow. Keep in mind that Churches either had to have their political wings clipped to keep them from building a religious bureaucracy above the existing government or to correct the mistake of allowing their power to exceed that of the standing government. Often religions' judicial system consist not of judge and jury but of clergymen who needed only to name you a heretic. In the eyes of religion, atheism cannot exist, neither any other God which would usurp their God's rightful position, this for those who belong to religious minorities, Would you allow you religion to be so persecuted, and your beliefs to be stripped in such a presumptuous way.

As people, Gays and Lesbians demand equality. We have asked and been ignored. In our lives we have been told that our love is a counterfeit, declared counterfeit by saying that we cannot have a legal binding ceremony between two already faithful parties who love one-another. I believe that we deserve equal treatment. I say that if we cannot have marriage between two people who love one-another, than neither should anyone else. I also believe that our political leaders who have passed along the buck regarding our issues because they have not the strength to stand tall against the tide of religious ideas, and religious zealots with their continuous onslaught of biased opinions, and for their own ambitious reasons, must be made to acknowledge the state of inequality within our deteriorating country and make the necessary changes to once again unify our country. I believe that the power for change should be given back to those with strong minds and hearts, and away from those with strong wallets.

In many aspects our country has once again become segregated. Let us as a people end segregation forever. We are one-people in the end, and if there is anything that is keeping us segregated it is the government's failure to give us equality within the law. Let the law stand separate from religion, and from the power of the dollar to buy an unfair legislature. Let our President and our Congress become once again men and women of character, honesty, and fairness in their dealings. Let our courts once again look toward truth and right in their dealings, and let all the citizens unite together for strength against bigotry, dishonesty, and violence. We all should have better, and can by working together to bring our personal agendas in alignment with our common goals. Move together for a better future, and cause those who would stand against equality to stand down, no matter what their title and position is.

God Bless the United States of America (whomever your God may be).

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