

Antigay Ammendment introduced in PA

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Abstract

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Two friends of mine have lost partners to death in the last year and a half. In each case they found that the legal protections that they set up to try and cover at least some of the benefits granted by marriage were inadequate. Both of my friends had to deal with legal and financial traumas in the wake of one of the most devastating losses that a person can experience.

We have few protections legally without marriage. To give a pointed example, a friend described to me her frustration in spending 2,500 dollars trying to set up arrangements so that she and her partner had at least some of the basic financial rights that a heterosexual married couple does. "And I could have more than this for twenty dollars if I could get a marriage license!" she had exclaimed as we sipped coffee discussing it.

The little, yet frustratingly difficult to achieve things that we can do now to try and claw into the exclusive privileges of a married couple for the sake of protecting someone that we love and have shared our life with may well be swept away courtesy of radical reactionaries in the Pennsylvania Legislature. Representative Daryl Metcalfe (R-Butler) and Senator Scott Boyd (R-Lancaster) have sought signatures for co-sponsors of bill to add an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution that would comprehensively invalidate any attempt to duplicate any type or form of the "rights" and protections that a heterosexual married couple share.

The reality of the situation is that if the bill passes, it is likely to be approved by the voters in a referendum. We are a tiny proportion of the population of the Commonwealth. The Amendment, packaged as a "protection" of marriage, will be sold to the public as just that, as it was in other states. Only afterwards will the reactionaries use it to end private and publicly funded domestic partner benefits, wills, joint checking accounts and other means that we currently use to try and provide for our loved ones, Oregon and Ohio being the most recent example of their objectives.

The Amendment will not simply block for decades our pursuit of further protections and recognition of our relationships; it will turn to ash any measures that we take financially on behalf of our loved ones now. It will leave medical decision making, power of attorney, property and financial resources vulnerable to legal challenges by blood kin despite stated intentions to have these things pass to the

individual that we have loved so deeply as to pledge to spend our life with.

Pennsylvania began as an experiment in tolerance and freedom, the child of the thinking of individuals such as William Penn, James Logan and Margaret Fell. It was born out of a reaction to the destruction of human rights by Cromwell and the Roundheads in the name their twisted view of morality. Swept out of power, the intolerant beliefs and tyrannies of these tormentors that Penn feared so deeply as to inspire the fervent pursuit of Pennsylvania Liberty also lingered to cast them as the spiritual ancestors and inspiration of the reactionaries in America today.

If the Marriage Amendment passes, the experiment that is Pennsylvania as we know it will have ended, the dreams of tolerance will have crumbled to dust, and the spirits of Cromwell and the Roundheads will have arrived to lay waste to freedom of conscience and the individual.

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