

ASIAN WEEK

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LGBT Perspective: Why Would APIs Favor Discrimination?

By: John and Belinda Dronkers-Laureta, Oct 02, 2008

At a meeting to defeat [Proposition 8](#)—the one that “eliminates the right of same sex couples to marry”—we learned that APIs are slightly more in favor of the proposition than against it. We are surprised.

APIs, with a long history of fighting against unequal rights, are now actually in favor of unequal rights? That doesn't make a lot of sense. Have we forgotten all those exclusion acts enacted to deny us rights other people take for granted? Have we forgotten what discrimination feels like?

Are you going to tell us that activist judges subverted the will of the people by overturning a year 2000 initiative that denied LGBTs the right to marry? Well, the will of the people has changed. The latest poll shows that 55 percent of likely voters will vote no on proposition 8.

As for those activist judges, judges are appointed or elected to interpret constitutional principles and not opinion polls. And in finding unconstitutional the prohibition of LGBTs to marry, the judges drew on arguments used in 1948 to overturn a law that prohibited marriage between Asians and Caucasians. Wasn't that a good thing? Do we think those 1948 judges were activists too?

Are you going to argue that marriage is an institution that unites only a man with a woman? Marriage is a social institution that unites people who love each other. The last 35 years have made it clear that love happens irrespective of gender. In California there are over 90,000 same-sex couples and almost 6,000 of those are API same-sex couples raising 4,400 children.

Perhaps you want to argue that LGBTs already have all the rights heterosexual married couples have in something called civil unions. In America, though, it has long been established that equal but separate is not a valid proposition.

Maybe you read Bishop Allen Vigneron's message to the faithful of the Oakland Diocese. He wrote, “Marriage is a reality authored by God in his very act of creating the human race.” That is news to us. Our friend Jay Johnson from the Pacific School of Religion told us that it was not until 1215 that marriage was declared a sacrament.

Admittedly, 800 years is time enough to have a belief tightly encrusted as dogma, but it is also true that for most of its existence the church did not think too much about the institution of marriage.

If you belong to a congregation that does not want to marry LGBTs, that's fine. But why would you impose that prohibition on the 3,100 (and growing) congregations that welcome LGBTs?

We, of course, do not understand why people support proposition 8. But we are totally at sea when we hear that Asians are. Think it over: Denying a right and repressing a group should be un-Asian. We should know better.

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