

"Religious Leaders Support the Freedom to Marry in Hawai'i": September 2013

Aloha:

I write to inform you that I have signed the "Religious Leaders Support the Freedom to Marry in Hawai'i" [see (3) below] as Bishop and on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i. I do so having consulted with the Diocesan Standing Committee. They formally urged me to sign for the Diocese by resolution at their meeting on Saturday, August 17, 2013 [see (1) below]. Further, the statement has been endorsed and supported by the action of Diocesan Council [see (2) below]. I share this to keep you informed as the statement is published and shared with government officials. The statement is offered to the community by concerned interfaith leaders of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

+Bob

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick
+ Keali'ikoaokeakua

(1) Resolution Adopted by the Standing Committee

Be it resolved that we, the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i acting as the Bishop's Council of Advice, ask the Bishop to sign the "Religious Leaders Support the Freedom to Marry in Hawai'i" statement as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i and on behalf of this Diocese.

(2) Resolution adopted by Diocesan Council

Be it resolved that we, the Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i, ask the Bishop to sign the "Religious Leaders Support the Freedom to Marry in Hawai'i" statement as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i and on behalf of this Diocese, and

Be it further resolved that this Council, acting on behalf of the Diocese when Convention is in recess, do endorse and support the "Religious Leaders Support the Freedom to Marry in Hawai'i" statement.

(3) Religious Leaders Support the Freedom to Marry in Hawai'i

As religious leaders and residents of the state of Hawai'i, we believe that the freedom of every citizen to practice his/her religion is based on the principle of respect for the inherent worth and dignity of each individual. We therefore call upon our elected officials to extend civil marriage benefits to loving same-gender couples as soon as possible, basing our conclusion on the following reasons:

- 'Ohana is important for all of us. We affirm that our families include couples, children, tutu, siblings, uncles, aunties, cousins, and even our faith 'ohana. The freedom to marry for all will build, support, and strengthen all in the family. LGBT people are not the "other" or foreign, but are part of our faith communities.
- Religious teachings on social fairness and compassion has been central to the building of the Beloved Community, valuing diversity within the human family, calling us to love one another.
- The First Amendment of the Constitution guarantees the separation of Church and State. In a place as religiously diverse as Hawai'i and the United States of America, this separation ensures that each religious community then chooses, according to their beliefs and values, whether to sanction marriages for LGBT couples or not.

Our goal is to abide by the Golden Rule, an ethic of reciprocity that can be found in most religious traditions. We want to rejoice with LGBT families as we honor their marriages as a source of joy and celebration amongst family and friends. While committed same-gender relationships have existed throughout history, the recent civil recognition of these relationships within and outside of the U.S. provides fairness, as called for in our nation's highest ideals and by our religious traditions. Grateful for the spiritual gift of diversity, and grateful for the fairness and freedoms ensured through our citizenship in Hawai'i and the United States of America, we sign this statement as people of faith and goodwill.