

Testimony in Support of An Act Concerning Marriage Equality

Alexandrina Sergio

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We are David and Alexandrina Sergio. We live in Glastonbury, where we have made our home for 47 years and have raised our four children. Let me tell you about one of those children, Lauren.

Our daughter Lauren is legally married. She and her spouse have two amazing babies, our grandchildren, Lindsay and Alistair. They live in Canada where they hold dual citizenship and enjoy all the protections and benefits rightfully accorded to families. In her home state of Connecticut, however, Lauren's family is denied the respect that comes with legal marriage because Lauren's spouse, Meg, is a woman.

Born gay, Lauren has no other marriage option-- not if she is to live her life responsibly, with integrity and honesty. To do that, she must live in another country where her marriage is recognized. Those in Connecticut who would withhold from Lauren and her family the protections that their own families enjoy endanger her and our grandchildren by promoting a government-sanctioned denigration of who they are.

It has become clear that many who would deny legal status to my family ultimately base their feelings on discomfort with the concept of homosexuality and hence of same-sex marriage. "I guess I'm just old fashioned" I've been told. How cruelly insulting for the lives of 10% or more of Connecticut's population to be dishonored because some people feel "uncomfortable."

Those who oppose same gender marriage, having run out of arguments, are calling for a voter referendum on marriage equality. *They think that my family's basic right to equal treatment under the law should be put to a vote! Like American Idol or the Miss Universe Pageant!* We are not seeking to engage in a popularity contest.

What we are asking for—what my family and all of Connecticut's gay and lesbian families have a right to expect--- is respect: the respect that only comes with equality under the law.

I have gifted you with a photograph which I have entitled "Happy Family." It is in your packets. It is a picture of Lauren, Meg and Lindsay, holding hands and walking up King Street in Toronto, Lindsay's little foot raised in the lead. My purpose in giving it to you is to point out that this discussion is not about some abstract concept. We are talking about real people. Real

lives. I ask you to display it in your offices as a reminder of who is being hurt by the *denial* of marriage equality. At the same time, keep in mind that no one will be hurt by *granting* marriage equality.

I beg you, in the name of justice, to seize this opportunity for leadership. Support this legislation. History will honor you.

David and Alexandrina Sergio, 64 Nuthatch Knob, Glastonbury, CT 06033



Happy Family: Lauren, Meg, Lindsay