

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

165 CHURCH STREET • NEW HAVEN • CONNECTICUT 06510



JOHN DESTEFANO, JR.
Mayor



*The vision of New Haven's children
is our city's greatest resource**

**TESTIMONY OF JOHN DESTEFANO, JR., MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF
RAISED BILL H.B. 7395, AN ACT CONCERNING MARRIAGE EQUALITY**

I strongly support Raised Bill 7395 *An Act Concerning Marriage Equality*, which would extend full equal rights and dignity under Connecticut law for committed relationships of couples, by eliminating the separate category for same-sex couples.

All Americans deserve equal rights. The politics of division is destructive and frankly, un-American. Historically, the history of civil rights in our society has been to recognize and welcome those who we previously saw as different from us, and to look for areas of commonality when there may appear to be differences. We have consistently worked to treat people equally, not to categorize people in ways that stigmatize them.

When two people choose to devote their lives to one another, that is a relationship that our society and our laws have recognized and respected. It is the commitment that those two people share that drives that recognition. The legal and social rights that we recognize should not differ based on whether they are man and woman, two women, or two men. These are families that care for one another, and are committed to one another.

We are at our best, and achieve the most, when we are able to look past apparent differences, recognize similarities, and use our differing abilities to make a stronger whole. A critical step in that process is to recognize and affirm one another's full equality.

The General Assembly took a large and important first step toward equality two years ago, when it created civil unions in order to provide same sex couples the rights, obligations and benefits of civil marriage. Connecticut became the first state to do so without a court order requiring it.

Please pass this bill into law so that Connecticut can continue to be a leader in recognizing the true equality of all of its citizens. We will be a better state and a better community for it.



phone 203.946.8200 fax 203.946.7683

**This creative impression is the work of Jennifer Montalvo, a student at Nathan Hale School.*