

## **Testimony of Eileen Ego**

### **In support of An Act Concerning Marriage Equality**

**March 26, 2007**

Good Afternoon. My name is Eileen Ego. My partner Corrine and I live in Griswold with our two daughters, Kailey who is 4 years old and Kianna who turned 10 months old earlier this week. I would like to speak to you today about why I want to get married.

I want to marry Corinne, first, because we love each other and have been in a committed relationship for nearly 15 years. We are “married” in most senses of the word: We have built a home for our family in a great neighborhood with lots of kids for our children to play with. We attend PTO meetings, ballet lessons and church on Sunday. We bake for coffee hour and participate in countless school fundraisers. When our first daughter was born, Corrine quit her job so that she could be a full time mom. She does a terrific job taking care of the girls and all of the other responsibilities that come with being a stay at home parent.

But we also worry about how our exclusion from marriage—how being put in a separate, unequal category—affects our children.

A few months ago, Kailey who is a self-professed princess, asked to see a picture of the “pretty dress” that Corrine had worn when she got married. We had to explain to her that in fact, we were not married. The look on her face was utter disbelief--“what do you mean you’re not married? Why not???”

In Kailey’s eyes, our family looks and behaves like all of her friends’ families—so of course we would be married, just as her friends’ parents are married. Thankfully, we were able to divert her attention. But Kailey is a very smart little girl and I know it is only a matter of time before the question comes again.

But how do you tell your daughter that her parents aren’t quite good enough for marriage? How do you tell her that her family is second-class?

I don’t have the words to explain this to her. I don’t know how to protect her from the inevitable conclusion that her family is not as valid as her friends’ families. I fear that her reaction will be that she, therefore, is not as valid or worthy.

Corrine and I are both very aware of the many influences in this world that conspire to devalue young girls. We very deliberately strive to bolster our daughters’ confidence and self

esteem. I fear that our efforts will be undermined in that moment when Kailey realizes her family—the center of her life—is devalued. And that the state has said that's okay.

Marriage is not just about my relationship with Corrine. It's about my family—it is about our dignity and our equality. I ask you today to please honor and respect that by moving forward with this bill.

Thank you.

Eileen Ego

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Our family