

just asking Do you feel the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts will be a positive or negative step for the sexual minorities community? Will it expedite equal rights, or will it ensure passage of the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment?

We will just have to fight all the harder to prevent "backlash" legislation. What we should do is promote the concept of "civil marriage" as separate from "sacred marriage." We can then argue that, given separation of church and state, all our laws and rules that refer to marriage (tax laws, visitation rights, etc.) of course mean civil marriage. If you get married in a church, you get the sacred marriage with the civil marriage thrown in. When President Bush claims that marriage is a sacred institution, he's obviously talking about sacred marriage; what does that have to do with our (civil) marriage laws? Let each church duke it out over what "sacred marriage" means.

DAVE RESSLER
Portland

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I think that any step toward legal equality with heterosexuals—on a local, statewide or national basis—is a positive development. Backing down on same-sex marriage in Massachusetts could actually make the Federal Marriage Amendment more popular than pushing it through, in that it is bound to look to someone like an admission of error or wrongdoing—"See! Even homosexuals know that we as a nation should walk all over our Constitution by pandering to religious inhibitions! Forget the separation of church and state! Forget 'all...are created equal!'"

Then again, since marriage is a religious institution, maybe it shouldn't be legally recognized at all. Civil unions all around?

JESSE JAMES LEFF GOSSON
Moro

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I feel the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts will be a positive step for the sexual minorities community. I feel Massachusetts is the most appropriate state to take this first step, since the hypocritical Catholic Church in Massachusetts is raising such a ruckus. I mean, give me a break, does anyone recall all those pedophile priests in Boston whom the Catholic hierarchy kept a secret? DUH! A pedophile is a male who feels inadequate as an adult, sexual person and allows himself to be castrated by a patriarchal religious and/or national power base.

I feel it will, in time, expedite equal rights for the sexual minorities community.

LINDA SEIDEL
Monmouth

next issue If you identify as gay or lesbian, would you date someone who identifies as bisexual? Why or why not? (Please see related item on Page 22.) Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

preparing to leave, she came up to us and asked if we were familiar with *Just Out*, and we said we were.

Then she asked: "Could I take your picture? I need to do a story about the opening, and you're the only ones who set off my gaydar!"

This turned out to be none other than Marty Davis herself, and we were actually flattered that she had asked! That certainly helped "validate" us as a "couple"—and who doesn't like to have their picture in the paper?

Additionally, after the picture appeared, both of us experienced others coming out to us on the bus

Unfortunately, though a tremendously positive step in the right direction, I believe the Massachusetts decision will show negative results for sexual minorities in the near future. There will undoubtedly be a highly reactive conservative backlash, and unfortunately, the large segment of society that would oppose discriminatory action will probably remain or eventually become silent in the same manner as those who opposed the war. Equal rights will probably be delayed as a result, and anti-gay legislation will certainly be more and more prevalent.

However, I also believe that legislation passed to prevent legally recognized same-sex unions will eventually be overturned by the courts...a long way down the road. I think the key will be to relegate the word "marriage" specifically for use within religious institutions. Relationships recognized for legal purposes, whether same-sex or opposite-sex, should all be referred to by another term (i.e., union). Hence, religious oversight of the public beginning of a relationship would involve two activities and two sets of paperwork—one religious and one secular/legal.

MARK LAUB
Vancouver, Wash.

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Positive step. It will expedite equal rights in the sense that it will mobilize those interested parties that may have been unwilling previously to step forward and speak out for equal rights. The argument for at least the recognition of civil unions has now reached a national audience that transcends sexual orientation. The voice of this majority I believe will be heard. Or I choose to believe that.

MICHAEL TEUFEL
Portland

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The ruling provides us with a footing into the community that will in time open its arms and hearts to us. No one should doubt that the next phase of this ruling will be the reactionary groups that seek nothing more than to limit what they believe to be a "homosexual agenda." The future is ours if we have the courage and desire to pursue it. Few steps forward are greeted with wild abandon and applause. So let's simply continue the work and keep faith with the path to equality for all.

MICHEIL MACCUTCHEON
Portland

or in restaurants or simply on the street. We're pretty sure we were recognized from that photo.

We've had the opportunity to meet and speak with Ms. Davis several times since, but we'll take this opportunity to again say, "Thank you, Marty." It's one of our favorite stories.

DONALD FINCH
MICHAEL KRZESZAK
Portland

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