



Maine Chapter

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Statement in Opposition to Ballot Question 1

We oppose Question 1 on the November ballot, which asks whether voters want to repeal the law allowing same sex couples to marry, on child welfare grounds. As physicians who care for children and their families, we are committed to supporting what is best for children. And there is no question that when their parents can marry, children are more protected legally and socially.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), our national organization with over 60,000 pediatrician members, commissioned a review of the relevant literature regarding child health in the context of same-sex unions. The report was authored by a diverse panel of 12 experts from around the country and was published in the AAP's journal *Pediatrics* in 2006. It concludes,

Civil marriage is a legal status that promotes healthy families by conferring a powerful set of rights, benefits, and protections that cannot be obtained by other means. Civil marriage can help foster financial and legal security, psychosocial stability, and an augmented sense of societal acceptance and support. Children who are raised by civilly married parents benefit from the legal status granted to their parents.

Supporting loving families also supports children. As pediatricians, we observe parents of all kinds everyday, including same-sex couples. We believe that the love, support and devotion of gay and lesbian parents for their children is no different from the love, support and devotion of other parents, and that children can and do thrive in many kinds of families. Our national report also concludes that same-sex couples raise healthy children.

Gay and lesbian people have been raising children for many years and will continue to do so in the future; the issue is whether these children will be raised by parents who have the rights, benefits, and protections of civil marriage.

There is ample evidence to show that children raised by same-gender parents fare as well as those raised by heterosexual parents. More than 25 years of research has documented that there is no relationship between parents' sexual orientation and any measure of a child's emotional, psychosocial, and behavioral adjustment... Conscientious and nurturing adults, whether they are men or women, heterosexual or homosexual, can be excellent parents. The rights, benefits, and protections of civil marriage can further strengthen these families.

The Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics opposes Question 1 because denying marriage to same-sex couples has harmful implications for thousands of Maine children.

Handwritten signature of Jonathan Fanburg, MD, MPH.

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