



Call for Testimony In Support of Marriage Equality

Submitting **written testimony** to the Washington legislature is easy, and is very important because it *builds a record of support* for equal marriage rights. It's an excellent opportunity to educate legislators. As we await a decision in Washington's historic marriage equality lawsuit is vitally important that we build support and understanding for marriage equality in the legislature.

Visit our website for additional info!

www.EqualRightsWashington.org

Equal Rights Washington will give every member of the legislature a copy of the testimony book!

Submitting written testimony is easy!—SEND IN YOUR TESTIMONY BY MAY 31st.

Anyone can submit written testimony – gay or straight, a grandmother or a high school student. Written testimony is simply a statement of why you support marriage equality. It is very powerful when you tell your own story and share your experiences and observations. You can talk about good or bad things that have already happened or about your aspirations. It's often easiest to write written testimony as if it were a 2 minute speech that you would give before a legislative committee considering marriage equality. An appropriate length is 1-2 pages.

Please send your written testimony to:
Equal Rights Washington
209 Harvard Ave E
Seattle Washington 98102

We encourage you to send in pictures of your family that we will include in the testimony book

You may email your testimony (and pictures if any) as an attachment to

testimony@EqualRightsWashington.org

Questions? Email or call 206-324-2570

You can start your written testimony like this

Testimony of (Your Name)
Your Home Address
In Support of Marriage Equality
Date

To: Honorable Members of the Washington State Legislature

Other ways your testimony can help us

We often get calls from the media who are interested in meeting people from specific towns or have encountered specific situations, such as not being able to put their partner on a healthcare plan. Many times press are also interested in speaking with straight allies. Often we like to use testimony in educational programs and in our literature. If you mail in your testimony please include the form below and if you e-mail us your testimony please tell us if we may use your testimony with the media and in our literature and educational programs.

What to say or write

There are no requirements for testimony, but here are a few basic guidelines:

- ∞ State the purpose of your testimony; (“I write in support of the marriage equality.”)
- ∞ Tell a personal story if it is relevant; share aspirations, experiences, and concerns;
- ∞ Talk about the needs of family and friends;
- ∞ Be polite but be firm;
- ∞ If you send us a written copy, please sign it.

For additional testimony suggestions visit www.EqualRightsWashington.org

It's better to focus on just a few points than make many points. Whenever possible it's best to personalize your testimony to your own experiences and observations.

Some themes you may wish to highlight:

- Marriage is a gateway to essential rights, protections and responsibilities that cannot be achieved through contracts, domestic partnerships, or Civil Unions.
- “Separate” is inherently unequal.
- Marriage is a fundamental human right.
- LGBT individuals form loving lasted committed relationships and need civil marriage rights for the same reasons as their heterosexual peers.
- Denying marriage rights to LGBT individuals stigmatizes gays and lesbians and is particularly harmful to LGBT youth and children being raised by same-sex couples.
- Opposition to marriage equality is based on lack of understanding of gays, lesbians, and their families and insensitivity to their needs.
- Civil marriage and religious marriage are two different things.
- Marriage is unique in its ability to protect families:
 - ∞ Seeks to confer federal rights
 - ∞ Confers all legal state rights, protections, benefits and responsibilities

----- Please tear off and return with testimony or e-mail the answers with testimony to Equal Rights Washington-----

May we use your testimony to help in our efforts to win full equality for GLBT families and individuals?

In addition to submitting your testimony to state legislators, we'd like your added permission to be able to utilize your written testimony in our advocacy efforts.

Please be aware that all written testimony becomes part of the public record.

Please check all that apply:

- You may use excerpts of my testimony in your brochures and other literature.
- You may use the pictures I've submitted On your website In your brochures, literature, presentations
- You may use my testimony in educational workshops and programs (we would not use your last name).
- Please feel free to give my testimony to the media, in whole or in part, including my full name and town.
- I'm willing to talk to the media: Phone _____ E-mail _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City / State / ZIP: _____

Equal Rights Washington, 209 Harvard Ave E Seattle, WA 98102

Email to testimony@EqualRightsWashington.org or fax to 206 324-2570. Visit www.EqualRightsWashington.org for more info!