



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Statement by Senator Thomas K. Duane RE: Results of Maine Referendum on Marriage Equality

THOMAS K. DUANE November 5, 2009

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“Yesterday’s referendum to repeal Maine’s marriage equality law was a blow to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, and indeed all those who believe in fairness and equality under the law. As in every struggle for civil rights, defeats are temporary – and so shall be this repeal in Maine.

A lot has been said about the amount of money spent on this referendum vote; who spent what, when and from where did the money come. Yet no amount of money can gauge the progress the LGBT community is making in changing the hearts and minds of people.

While on the one hand it is discouraging that only 47% of Maine voters supported marriage equality, on the other hand, only five years ago no one would have imagined that a vote on marriage equality in any state could be this close. The time, energy and effort supporters took to educate citizens on marriage equality paid enormous dividends. Every time the issue of marriage equality is on the front page of the paper, we win.

Elected officials not only from Maine, but Vermont, New Hampshire, California and Connecticut have taken a stand and fought to make marriage equality a reality in their states. Legislators in a representative democracy are not simply beholden to a fearful majority, but have a duty to lead and educate their constituents on the importance of enacting civil rights for all of its citizens.

This is why I have so much confidence that New York will soon be the next state to enact marriage equality. I strongly believe that my colleagues from both sides of the aisle will step up and do the right thing. We have come so far in such a short time. Civil rights, which sometimes seem slow to be granted, can never be denied – and we must never give up the fight.”

--New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane, 29th District

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