



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Statement of Senator Duane RE: Marriage Equality Vote in NYS State Senate

THOMAS K. DUANE December 2, 2009

| ISSUE: **CIVIL RIGHTS**

"Today's vote against Marriage Equality makes me very angry. Promises made were not honored. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, and all fair minded New Yorkers, have been betrayed. I am enraged, deeply disappointed and profoundly saddened by the vote today.

In 2006, when the New York State Court of Appeals shamefully decided that same-gender couples did not have equal protection under the law in relation to marriage, I predicted that passing legislation to right this wrong in the State Senate would be a profound personal and sadly political battle.

I have been proven right.

Yet there is an irony in today's vote. Five years ago no one would have predicted that a vote would even *be possible* in the Senate. Today, on the floor of the Senate, we had an open and honest debate about the indignity of denying marriage equality to thousands of New York's LGBT citizens. We heard stories of family members and friends who have suffered merely because they are gay. Only one Senator who opposed marriage equality spoke on behalf of that position. Yes, the vote was a terrible defeat. But there was an honest debate with one

side, sadly not the winning side, overwhelmingly represented – the side that represented justice and equality.

Now that this discussion has started in the Senate, it cannot be stopped. We will see marriage equality pass in New York. Though sadly not today, marriage equality will pass in the near future: openly, strongly and with bi-partisan support.

I want to applaud those friends and advocates in the LGBT community who insisted on a vote, regardless of the outcome. This was very brave and it was the right thing to do. I was honored to bring the bill to the floor of the Senate, for an up or down vote, with their encouragement and support.

Today also brought home the fact that the State Senate must maintain a Democratic majority– and in even greater numbers. It was only under Democratic leadership that this vote was possible. We must also have a Governor willing to sign marriage equality into law.

Most importantly I am grateful to all my Democratic colleagues who spoke so eloquently in favor of marriage equality and all those who voted in the affirmative. And I also believe in redemption, even for State Senators who need that chance.

I am confident that we will win the fight for marriage equality in New York State.”

###