



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## **Statement from Senator Liz Krueger on Marriage Equality**

Liz Krueger

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"I am extremely pleased that Governor Cuomo has made the passage of marriage equality legislation one of his top priorities for this legislative session. With polls now showing a clear majority of New Yorkers supporting marriage equality, I am more and more optimistic that if the Senate Majority allows the bill to come to the floor for a vote, it will have a good chance of passing.

"I strongly support marriage equality as a basic civil rights issue. Under current New York law, lesbian and gay couples are denied the basic protections provided to heterosexual couples. Denying gays and lesbians access to those benefits and protections - as well as the many responsibilities which come with civil marriage - is a violation of the fundamental principle of equal protection under our State constitution.

"Those who argue against marriage equality usually base their arguments either on 1) religious grounds or 2) their belief that marriage should be reserved for relationships centered around procreation and child rearing. The first argument fails to recognize both the separation of church and state and the fact that many denominations do in fact already recognize same sex marriages. And the second argument is just plain silly.

"Legalizing same-sex marriage would not, and could not, force any religious officials to do anything. Religious institutions already choose who can or cannot get married within their denominations, for both same and opposite sex marriages, and they would continue to do so. The only institution which would be required to recognize same-sex marriages would be the State.

"Similarly, family- and procreation-based arguments fail to recognize how many same-sex couples are in fact raising children, as well as how many opposite-sex married couples are not. Marriage equality would benefit same-sex couples, but it would also provide huge benefits to their children, who would gain many protections by having their parents' relationship legally recognized.

"Denying couples marriage recognition by the State serves to discriminate not only against the individuals wishing to enter into those marriages, but also harms all of us who remain living in a society where we know that we are allowing family, friends and neighbors to be discriminated against by their government.

"New York has a reputation for being at the forefront in the fight to eliminate the vestiges of discrimination, but we have fallen behind when it comes to ensuring basic equality for lesbian and gay New Yorkers. Even Iowa, yes IOWA, has legalized same sex marriage! It is long past time for New York to step up and join the list of States that have ended discriminatory practices against same sex couples. It is time for New York to have marriage equality."

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