

**ACLU OF PENNSYLVANIA CRITICIZES PROPOSED  
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AS ANTI-FAMILY  
AND DISCRIMINATORY**

**Statement of Larry Frankel, Legislative Director  
ACLU of Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, January 24, 2006**

PHILADELPHIA – The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania proudly joins with our allies and friends to announce our spirited opposition to the constitutional amendment that is being proposed here in Pennsylvania. We know that this amendment is not just about same-sex marriage. Rather we recognize it for what it is – a political and divisive attack on thousands of families, children and loving relationships. We call on the members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly to reject this unnecessary and discriminatory amendment.

One need only look at the language of the proposed amendment to understand that this is not just a question of banning same-sex marriage. No, this amendment would bar the legal recognition of any kind of intimate relationship that is not a heterosexual marriage. This means no recognition for civil unions, domestic partnerships, or life partnerships. This non-recognition would extend to opposite sex couples as well as same-sex couples.

This amendment could have a substantial negative impact on the children and other family members who live with such couples. Access to health insurance could be impaired. Family or medical leave could be denied. Domestic violence victims could be denied relief, just like in Ohio.

Proponents of this amendment are saying that Pennsylvania must act to amend its constitution because a judge in Maryland, last week, decided that the Maryland law banning same sex marriage was sex discrimination and violated the Maryland Constitution's equal rights provisions.

It is always troubling to see any legislature react to any court decision by hastily passing a constitutional amendment. It would be especially troubling to see this legislature do that in response to a trial court decision from another state.

A court decision from another state is no reason to create second-class citizens in Pennsylvania. Those who want to put discrimination into the Constitution would have been promoting this divisive idea no matter what the court in Maryland decided. Our elected officials should act to protect and nurture all of Pennsylvania's families and not be persuaded by those special interests who think they own the right to say who is a family.