

Love



Family



Equality

WHY MARRIAGE MATTERS

Marriage matters to gay and lesbian people in similar ways that it matters to everyone. Same sex couples want the right to marry in order to make a lifetime commitment to the person they love and to protect their families.

MARRIAGE MATTERS

- ♥ Marriage is a unique legal status conferred by and recognised by governments the world over. It brings with it a host of reciprocal obligations, rights and protections. Yet it is more than the sum of its legal parts; it is also a cultural institution. The word itself is a fundamental protection, conveying clearly that you and your life partner love each other. It represents the ultimate expression of love and commitment between two people, and everyone understands that. No other word has that power, and no other word can provide that protection.

MARRIAGE “ALTERNATIVES” ARE NOT EQUALITY

- ♥ Civil Partnership does not provide the same rights and entitlements that marriage does; in fact, there are over 169 differences. And any difference means that same sex couples are being denied equality.
- ♥ One major difference is that the current Civil Partnership legislation does not recognise the relationship between parents and children in same sex families. Many same sex couples across Ireland already have children, or plan to have children in the future. Excluding these couples from the institution of marriage harms these children by denying them and their parents the rights and protections that are given to married families.
- ♥ Ultimately, what Civil Partnerships symbolise is a belief that the love and commitment shared by same sex couples and families is not as worthy of support and protection as the love shared by people of the opposite sex and their families.

MARRIAGE HELPS TO PROTECT IRISH FAMILIES

- ♥ Irish marriage law provides legal and economic protections for the children of married couples. These protections were not included in the Civil Partnership Act, leaving children of same sex couples unprotected and unrecognised in Irish law.
- ♥ Families, including Irish families, have grown more diverse in recent decades, and researchers around the world have studied how these different family relationships affect children. It has become clear that the quality of a family's relationship is more important than the particular structure of families that exist today.
- ♥ In other words, the qualities that help children grow into good and responsible adults -- learning how to learn, to have compassion for others, to contribute to society and be respectful of others and their differences -- do not depend on the sexual orientation of their parents but on their parents' ability to provide a loving, stable and happy home. Many studies have shown that the outcomes for children raised by same sex couples are just as good as those raised by heterosexual couples. For more information, please visit www.marriagequality.ie/getinformed/families



THE WHOLE TRUTH

Myths & Misconceptions about Marriage Equality

MYTH 1: CIVIL PARTNERSHIP IS THE SAME AS MARRIAGE

- ♥ A Civil Partnership is not the same as a civil marriage – in fact, there are over 169 legislative differences!
- ♥ What Civil Partnerships symbolise is a belief that the love and commitment shared by same sex couples and families is not as worthy of support and protection than the love shared by people of the opposite sex and their families.
- ♥ Civil Partnerships, as a separate, unequal system mean that same sex couples are being denied equality.

MYTH 2: MARRIAGE IS BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN. IT IS NEEDED FOR PROCREATION.

- ♥ Marriage is, and always has been, a dynamic and evolving institution. For example, even as recently as 1996 the Irish understanding of marriage was evolving. Prior to that, the State did not recognise divorces or remarriages.
- ♥ At one time it was unheard of for a couple to marry just because they loved each other – marriage was about property and providing an heir. Today, most people would agree that a marriage is an equal, loving partnership - a far cry from the definition of marriage many hundreds of years ago.
- ♥ All across Ireland, families come in many forms. Many same sex couples across Ireland already have children, or plan to have children in the future. Excluding same sex couples from the institution of marriage harms these children by denying them and their parents the rights and protections that are given to married families.

It is estimated that between 6-10% of the Irish population is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

That means these issues and inequalities affect 275,000 to 458,000 people in Ireland.

For more information and ways to get involved, please visit:

www.marriagequality.ie

Special thanks to Why Marriage Matters (www.whymarriagematters.org)

MYTH 3: MARRIAGE IS A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION. IT IS ABOUT GETTING MARRIED IN A CHURCH.

- ♥ The struggle for marriage equality for same sex couples is a struggle for civil marriage, not for religious marriage.
- ♥ When a couple is married in a civil ceremony at a registry office, religion is not involved. This is because civil marriage is a relationship that is sanctioned and licensed by the State, and does not require the blessing of any religious institution.
- ♥ Just as religious institutions were not forced to remarry divorced couples when civil marriage was extended to divorced men and women, they will not be forced to marry same sex couples, should civil marriage be extended to lesbians and gay men.

MYTH 4: IRISH PEOPLE ARE AGAINST THE IDEA OF EXTENDING MARRIAGE TO SAME SEX COUPLES

- ♥ Ireland currently has very high levels of support for the right of same sex couples to marry – and it's growing!
- ♥ Between 2008 and 2011, we've seen popular support for marriage equality grow from 58% to 73%.

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