



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

## Statement Praising Vermont Legislature on Approving Same-Sex Civil Marriages

THOMAS K. DUANE May 7, 2009



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Statement of New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane

on the Vermont Legislature Approving Same-Sex Civil Marriages

Today the Vermont State Legislature overrode a veto from Governor Jim Douglas to make Vermont the fourth state to grant equality in civil marriage, irrespective of sexual

orientation, and the first to offer a successful legislative remedy to the issue of same-sex civil marriage. There are now four states that recognize that equal protection under the law is a fundamental human right: Vermont, Iowa, Connecticut and Massachusetts. What we are witnessing is a wave of momentum picking up speed across this country to grant equal protection to those who seek same-sex civil marriage.

From California, where we are redoubling our efforts to win back our hard won victory, to Iowa, where we have been propelled to the cutting edge of civil rights, to Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts, we are at the cusp of achieving real equality that has been denied for far too long.

Since 2001, when I introduced a same-sex civil marriage bill for the first time it has been my promise to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community in this state that I would fight for the right to same-sex civil marriage. In 2006, when the New York Court of Appeals' shameful decision against same-sex civil marriage failed to recognize the simple concept of our state's own equal protection clause, we were thrown into the political equivalent of a street brawl – which we find ourselves mired in today.

As a result, I have worked tirelessly with advocates on this issue and take up the mantle of making same-sex civil marriage a reality in this state. This remains my goal. I want the people of New York to know that we will not stop working until we have achieved equal rights under the law. I am your advocate and I will never give up.

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