



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

IDC Report Shows \$391 Million Positive Impact for Marriage Equality

DAVID J. VALESKY May 10, 2011

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The Independent Democratic Conference today reaffirmed its support for marriage equality and released a report showing that New York State stands to generate some \$391 million in increased economic activity, revenue, and savings during the three years after it is made law.

The IDC released their report, “For Love or Money?: The Economic Impact of Marriage Equality in New York,” while standing with advocates and constituents who are pushing to make marriage equality a reality in New York.

“Marriage is a right that should be afforded to all New Yorkers,” **Senator David J. Valesky, (D-Oneida), said.** “We should bring this legislation to the floor for a vote this session, and make marriage equality a reality.”

“The lack of marriage equality in New York means that this state lacks equal rights for all of its citizens,” said **Senator Diane Savino, (D-Staten Island/ Brooklyn).** “This report shows that bringing marriage equality to New York will not only be a victory for human rights, it will also have a positive economic impact on the Empire State.”

Using conservative estimates, the report estimated that 21,309 gay and lesbian couples from New York would get married within the first three years. It also estimates that 3,308 couples from surrounding states that do not have marriage equality would travel to New York to get married, as would 41,907 non-New York gay and lesbian couples who would travel to New York for a “destination wedding.”

This influx would be a boon to New York's wedding and tourism industries, which has been hard hit by the current economic downturn. It would also result in increased revenue for New York State through increased sales tax collections, and help for municipalities in increased collections from marriage license fees, local sales tax, and, in New York City, a hotel occupancy tax.

“New York State must move out of the era of suppression and into the era of equal rights for all New Yorkers,” **Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Orange)** said. “First and foremost, marriage equality is a human rights issue, but furthermore it will bring much needed revenue into New York State. I have always held the belief that New York was among the most open minded and progressive states, however regarding this issue of marriage equality we have fallen far short of that reputation. It is an embarrassment and a shame on our state that we have not passed a marriage bill yet. We must pass marriage equality now.”

Specifically:

Revenue	Total
Wedding Revenue and Tourism.....	\$283,810,725
Marriage License Fees.....	\$3,792,400
Sales Tax.....	\$22,704,858
NYC Hotel Occupancy Tax.....	\$259,669
Total.....	<i>\$310,567,652.00</i>

“Passing marriage equality is both morally just and economically prudent,” said **Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, (D-Bronx/Westchester.)** “We must correct our current system where we have two classes of New Yorkers: Those who can marry who they love, and those who can't. Financially, putting marriage equality on the books means dollars, as well as common sense.”

Passing marriage equality will also result in a significant savings to state and local means-tested programs. For many programs that consider a spouse's income and assets, a married applicant is generally less likely to qualify for assistance than single applicants. If gay and lesbian couples were able to marry, however, both partners' income and assets could be counted in determining eligibility.

To calculate the numbers in this report, the IDC used methodology established in “Love Counts” the landmark 2007 report from the New York City Comptroller's Office, and later The Williams Institute of the UCLA School of Law, which has released similar studies for 14 other states and the District of Columbia.

"Morally, allowing all loving, committed couples to marry is the right thing to do -- now there is additional data showing it's the right thing to do economically too," said **Ross D. Levi, Executive Director of the Empire State Pride Agenda.** "The economic activity created by weddings, the savings to the state and the benefits to business in being able to attract and retain the best talent clearly show that marriage equality will have a major positive impact on New York State's economy."

Assemblyman Matthew Titone lives in Staten Island with his partner Josh. They have been together for 18 years. He said: “We just passed an extraordinarily austere budget with vital services cut and reduced. There is no excuse not to pass marriage equality. Some New Yorkers may not always think with their hearts, but they certainly think with their wallets.”

Barb and Don Crawford live in Cicero, Onondaga County. They have two daughters, one straight and one gay, and are fighting to make sure that they are treated equally. They said: "We are proud and pleased that our Senator, Dave Valesky, and the IDC have taken this stand for equal rights and that one of our daughters will no longer be denied the same rights, responsibilities and benefits that her father, her sister and I have."

Cheryl Dennin, a lifelong New York state resident, lives in Delmar, Albany County, with her wife Edie Eyres. They have been together 19 years and were married in Canada in 2008. She said: "Gay New Yorkers are liberals and conservatives; Republicans and Democrats. Our faith crosses all religious communities. We are economically diverse. We have children and grandchildren. We live in every county in New York State. It's time our legislators step up to the plate and pass marriage equality for their constituents. I applaud the Independent Democratic Conference for their rational and fervent leadership in this regard."

Barry Kramer lives with his partner John Crittenden in Eastchester, Westchester County. He said: “As someone who has been in a committed relationship for 20 years, my partner and I believe that we should have the same rights and responsibilities that other loving couples enjoy. With momentum swinging our way, we hope that the Independent Democratic Conference's report will be that final push needed to bring marriage equality to New York.”

Vincent Maniscalco lives in Averill Park, Rensselaer County, with his husband, Ed DeBonis. They have been together for 16 years and were married in Massachusetts in 2004. He said: “We live here, pay our taxes here and own our own business here. Yet, we had to go to Massachusetts in order to get our marriage legally recognized. Any New York couple who loves each other deserves the equal chance to get married in New York. I know that's how a majority of our neighbors feel. I hope that our efforts today will help change those last few minds that stand between what is fair and what is unjust.”