



Center statement regarding bill to repeal DOMA

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DENVER -- The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of Colorado applauded the introduction of legislation today that would repeal the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act.

The "Respect for Marriage Act," introduced by Rep. Jared Polis, D-CO, Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-NY, Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-WI, as well as nearly 90 other members of Congress, would repeal DOMA and restore the rights of all legally married couples, including same-sex couples.

"The Center hopes this bill will fully repeal DOMA," said Mindy Barton, legal director for The Center. "DOMA has been hurtful to gay and lesbian couples in Colorado and nationwide by singling out legally married same-sex couples for discriminatory treatment under federal law."

DOMA is discriminatory in that it advises states to disregard same-sex marriages that have been performed legally in other states, as well as prohibits the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

Passed in 1996, DOMA states that only people in heterosexual marriages will be treated as married under federal law, so same-sex couples are denied more than 1,100 federal protections, such as Social Security survivor benefits, Family Medical Leave protection and immigration benefits.

In 2006, voters in Colorado approved similar language defining "marriage" in the state as being between one man and one woman. However, a December 2008 poll by Harris Interactive showed that 83 percent of Colorado adults believe gay and lesbian couples should either be able to marry, have all the same rights as marriage, or be able to form domestic partnerships.

The GLBT Community Center of Colorado is the only statewide, nonprofit community center dedicated to providing support and advocacy for Colorado's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) population. The Center serves as a catalyst for community organizing, support services, social activities and cultural events.

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