

— OPINION: SAME-SEX UNIONS —

Two steps back?

Nebraska lacks national progressive sentiment

Nebraska has just taken yet another subhuman step back for mankind. You think I'm kidding? Look in the paper.

As I'm sure most of you have heard by now, there are some mean people out there who want to ruin other people's lives. Gay people's lives to be exact. Let me take you back to 1996 when groups like the Nebraska Family Council and the Nebraska Christian Coalition have been seething and festering, waiting for the perfect moment to strike out against gay marriages.

Since then, these groups have been goading brainless people into carrying around a clipboard, a pen, some ballots and VAGUE DESCRIPTIONS OF A CAUSE in order to change the Nebraska Constitution. They needed 107,000 signatures; they got 155,000.

Folks, gay ones that is, we're gonna lose this battle. Call me negative, but call me realistic. The gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and straight folks who believe in equality can only do so much. We are outnumbered and

got a late start. Of course, we didn't know this was coming so the late start was reactionary, but now the best we can hope for is craploads of national coverage so people all over the nation can snicker and then try to help us poor souls.

I see this all as a big step back for Nebraska, but in the meantime, other states out there (like the other 49) are making progress. They are learning to share the wealth of the happiness of marriage instead of hoarding it for themselves. All right, maybe this is just Vermont, but it's a start! I still love Nebraska despite its backward momentum; it always provides me and the rest o' the queers with something to fight for (or against).

No one can say, "There's nothing to whine about in Nebraska". I say, let Nebraska be conservative and STRAIGHT, we're already ostracized for enough things that we will never live down. In fact, if Nebraska does ever accept marriage for all people, it won't matter — the other states will continually beat

us up and give us wedgies the size of, well, Texas because it took us so long to catch up to the crowd. Nebraska is afraid of this "catching up" but believe you me, sometimes it's for the better. Sometimes it's for equality's sake.

The only thing to do now is to educate the people who signed the goddamned petition to know exactly what they signed. We have not the manpower compared to the ASSHOLES AT LARGE (they had 4,000 armed units) but there's nothing to do but try. For instance, a-hem, there is a meeting at the Unitarian church tonight at 7, to plan and assemble a strong military...er, void of weapons, uniforms, and straight soldiers of course.

Now, I'm so tempted to tell these lost souls that signed and passed around the petition that the Nebraska Constitution already states what the proposal is going to say.

The proposal says that "Only marriage between a man and a

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Fuzzy logic

Ban of same-sex unions flawed

Let's hear it for the Religious Right.

In their endless pursuit of instilling the fear of God in the rest of us, the religious initiative has gathered enough signatures to put a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot in Nebraska this November. As it stands, the amendment would not allow the recognition of gay marriages, unions or any other "domestic partnership."

The amendment is a wonder in modern government. It has serious practical, ethical and constitutional errors. However, the public seems to be supporting it thus far, as it wants to protect marriage, a "fundamental building-block" of society.

That heterosexual families form an essential mortar to this pseudo-capitalistic, mostly-democratic society can't be denied. But ban supporters claim this mortar needs to be defended — that the work of gays and straight allies to give to gay couples rights that straight couples take for granted is a direct assault on traditional marriage.

True, allowing gays to marry in civil ceremonies will redefine the public's perception of what civil marriage really is — but it doesn't change the facts.

Ban-supporters who claim that the gay minority is trying to redefine marriage for the majority don't acknowledge that there are two dimensions to marriage — the civil and the religious. Often melded together in ceremonies, these dimensions are still distinct.

The claim against acknowledging homosexual unions rises primarily from religious arguments — and if a particular religion wishes not to acknowledge such unions, that is their right, and no one can, or should, force that religion to change its position.

However, the civil dimension of marriage — which includes not only tax adjustments, but hospital visitation rights, inheritance procedures, sick leave to care for an ill spouse, among others — is based neither on religion nor on the desire to promote the religious dimension of mar-

riage. It is simply an acknowledgment that married couples often act a certain way, and there are certain privileges that seem only natural for a long-term, committed relationship.

And since some gays have the desire for such relationships, and will do so with or without the support of the state, why should we deny them? Is it ethical to use the state to separate a couple of dedicated partners simply because the society's majority thinks it is wrong for the two to be together?

That the ban is little more than an official statement of anti-homosexuality, forging an indelible blemish on our state constitution, should be enough for the signatories to reconsider. But there is a further issue to be addressed: the separation of church and state.

Article I, Section 4 of the Nebraska Constitution states that "no preference shall be given by law to any religious society." The proposed amendment does not

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