

# U.S. Rep. Pocan: Equality Caucus applauds introduction of the Respect for Marriage Act

Posted on Monday, Jul 18, 2022

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus applauds the introduction of H.R. 8404, the Respect for Marriage Act. Every openly LGBTQ+ member of Congress joined House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (NY-10) — as well as Tri-Caucus Chairs Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Raul Ruiz (D-CA), and Judy Chu (D-CA), and Democratic Caucus Chairman Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) — in introducing the Respect for Marriage Act, which would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure critical protections for same-sex and interracial marriages.

“Today’s introduction of the Respect for Marriage Act is a critical step towards protecting marriage equality, which has positively shaped the lives of millions of LGBTQ+ people and families across the country,” said **Congressman David N. Cicilline (RI-01), Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.** “On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court declared marriage equality as the law of the land, but after the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision and Justice Thomas’ alarming concurring opinion, it is critical that we do everything we constitutionally can to ensure that marriages across this country continue to be recognized and protected. I thank Chairman Nadler for his long-term championing of the Respect for Marriage Act and am proud to have joined him, the Equality Caucus Co-Chairs, the Tri-Caucus Chairs, and the Democratic Caucus Chair in introducing this legislation. We must ensure protections for same-sex and interracial marriages so all married people who are building their lives together know the government will respect and recognize their marriages.”

“We will not sit idly by as Republicans and their activist judges take our country backward. They started with reproductive rights and they’re targeting protections

for same-sex marriage next,” said **Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.** “I’ve been with my husband Randy for 30 years, but we’ve only spent 8 of them as a legally married couple. For families like mine, the Respect for Marriage Act is a necessary step to protect our fundamental rights, and I am proud to support this vital legislation to ensure protections for same-sex and interracial marriage in every corner of the United States.”

“This is deeply personal to me. My husband, Phil, and I have been married for more than 15 years,” said **Congressman Mark Pocan (WI-02), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.** “Radicals on the Supreme Court have shown utter disregard for precedent, and I thank Chairman Nadler for taking swift action in response. The House and Senate need to pass the Respect for Marriage Act immediately to protect marriage equality.”

“In the wake of the Supreme Court’s egregious decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, Republican lawmakers and Supreme Court Justices have expressed that they are coming for other protections embedded in the Constitutional right to privacy – including marriage equality,” said **Congressman Mark Takano (CA-41), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.** “We must pass the Respect for Marriage Act to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure that same-sex marriages and interracial marriages are recognized nationwide. Our basic human rights are at stake – we have to legislate like it.”

“The urgency of this moment could not be more apparent. Our extremist Supreme Court just unleashed an attack on a woman’s legal right to abortion, and hinted that marriage equality is next,” said **Congresswoman Angie Craig (MN-02), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.** “It is critical that Congress passes the Respect for Marriage Act to codify the right to same-sex marriage and allow every American to love and marry whomever they choose.”

“From what we’ve seen in last few weeks, it’s clear the individual freedoms of all Americans face significant threats that go beyond making our own health care choices without the interference of politicians,” said **Congresswoman Sharice Davids (KS-03), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus.** “Since being sworn into Congress, I’ve made it my mission to work for all Kansans no matter what party they support or who they love. I urge my colleagues to join me in protecting our basic human rights, including the right to marry.”

“We cannot count on the Supreme Court to defend important precedents and protect our rights, and Congress has an obligation to ensure everyone is treated equally before the law. The idea that we could lose the freedom to marry is chilling to most Americans and runs contrary to our shared values,” said **Congressman Chris Pappas (NH-01), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus**. “We can’t take anything for granted. This legislation would make sure that our government, at both the state and federal level, reflects the diversity, decency, and spirit of the American people. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will listen to their constituents and defend every individuals’ freedom to be themselves, love whom they want to love, and marry the person of their choosing.”

“The far-right Supreme Court is on a rampage against the freedoms of the American people, having just eliminated the right to an abortion after dismantling the Voting Rights Act. Justice Thomas’ concurring opinion in Dobbs made clear that marriage equality is next on the chopping block,” said **Congressman Mondaire Jones (NY-17), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus**. “As the first openly gay, black member of Congress, this fight is personal to me. I still remember where I was when the New York legislature passed marriage equality, and when Obergefell was decided years later. Progress must be fought for and protected. To protect fundamental rights, Congress must use its legislative powers. That’s why I’m proud to introduce the Respect for Marriage Act today. It’s past time for Congress to establish that marriage equality is the law of the land and ensure Americans across the country can continue to marry who they love without discrimination.”

“During Pride Month, Justice Thomas announced to the world his crusade to overturn the privacy, intimacy, and marriage equality of the LGBTQ community. As we continue to see attacks on fundamental rights from the Court, it is clearer than ever that we must use every tool at our disposal to protect marriage equality,” said **Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), Co-Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus**. “I am proud to join Chairman Nadler and my colleagues in the Equality Caucus in taking this crucial step to protect same sex and interracial marriage across the nation.”

The bill text can be found [here](#).