

Fair Wisconsin: Stands with Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus and celebrates pro-marriage equality bills

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Today, on the one year anniversary of the Respect for Marriage Act championed by U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin's Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus introduced a package of bills that would enshrine marriage equality into state law and safeguard the progress we have made in advancing the rights and freedoms of LGBTQ+ families.

If signed into law, these bills would remove the unenforceable and exclusionary definition of marriage that is still in our state's constitution and defines marriage as only between a man and a woman. It would also clean up state statute by removing gendered language like "husband and wife" and replacing it with more inclusive, gender neutral alternatives such as "spouse."

As Wisconsin's only statewide LGBTQ+ civil rights and political advocacy organization, Fair Wisconsin is grateful for the leadership of the entire Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus and is proud to support this package of legislation.

Fair Wisconsin's Executive Director Megin McDonell issued the following statement regarding the introduction of the bills:

"On a day when we should be celebrating the historic achievements of the Respect for Marriage Act and highlighting positive, pro-LGBTQ+ legislation that moves our state forward, Republicans in the State Senate are instead looking backward and continuing to restrict the rights of queer and trans youth.

This legislative session, we have seen a record number of attempts to ban books, censor educators, take away access to healthcare, and even bar transgender student athletes from playing on sports teams. Today's package of pro-equality bills is a sharp contrast to this harmful, anti-LGBTQ+ agenda.

Currently, 35 states including Wisconsin have statutory or constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage. Although we have the precedent of the *Obergefell* and *Wolf* decisions, if these decisions were to be overturned our constitutional ban would most likely go into effect. The Respect for Marriage Act does not supersede Wisconsin's constitutional amendment and does not require every state to allow same-sex marriages. It simply requires that if a marriage is performed in the future in a state where it is legal, it must be recognized by any other state.

Enshrining protections for marriage equality was and still is core to Fair Wisconsin's mission. It is far past time to remove the outdated and unenforceable constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, update our state statutes to remove gendered language, and add gender identity and expression to our non-discrimination laws."