

**The Problem**

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) singles out lawfully married same-sex couples for unequal treatment under federal law. This law discriminates in two important ways. First, Section 2 of DOMA purports to allow states to refuse to recognize valid civil marriages of same-sex couples. Second, Section 3 of the law carves all same-sex couples, regardless of their marital status, out of all federal statutes, regulations, and rulings applicable to all other married people—thereby denying them over 1,100 federal benefits and protections. Since DOMA's passage in 1996, five states and the District of Columbia have provided equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, and two other jurisdictions recognize marriages of same-sex couples celebrated in other states and abroad.

The Solution

The Respect for Marriage Act (RMA) repeals DOMA and restores the rights of all lawfully married couples—including same-sex couples—to receive the benefits of marriage under federal law. The bill also provides same-sex couples with certainty that federal benefits and protections would flow from a valid marriage celebrated in a state where such marriages are legal, even if a couple moves or travels to another state. By repealing Section 2, the Respect for Marriage Act returns to traditional principles of comity and Full Faith and Credit.

Catholic Support

- 71% of American Catholics support Civil Marriage for gay and lesbian couples – Public Religion Research Institute, 2011
- 63% of American Catholics support Civil Marriage for gay and lesbian couples – ABC News/Washington Post, 2011

Catholic Talking Points

- Catholics know love and commitment when they see it and have made up their own minds on this issue based on what they see in their families, parishes and communities.
- As Roman Catholics, we differentiate between sacramental marriage and civil marriage. Therefore, we perceive that same-sex civil marriage poses no threat to our Church.
- The Respect for Marriage Act includes broad religious exemptions and does not apply to our church, nor any of our privately funded church organizations and programs.

Catholic Social Teaching and Scripture

- “Love is thus a positive force directed towards their [men and women] growth in maturity as persons. In the plan of life which represents each person's vocation, love is also a precious source for the self-giving which all men and women are called to make for their own self-realization and happiness.” –The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 1995, #3.
- “But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a disciplinarian. For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” – Galatians 3: 25-28 (New American Bible)

Catholic Constituent Faces of Marriage Equality: Available upon request