



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

November 8, 2011

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Respect for Marriage Act of 2011 (S. 598)

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I join other state and local leaders asking you to pass the Respect for Marriage Act, but write separately because California is uniquely positioned.

18,000 same-sex couples were legally married in California following a June 2008 state supreme court decision interpreting state-constitutional principles of equality and fairness. Additional same-sex marriages, however, were halted after the electorate narrowly passed Proposition 8 – an initiative that banned new same-sex marriages. Although a federal district court has ruled that Proposition 8 violates the federal Constitution, the ability of same-sex couples to marry remains on hold pending the appeal of that decision.

Regardless of the litigation concerning Proposition 8, the 18,000 same-sex marriages entered into in 2008 are and will remain valid. Californians in these marriages deserve to be treated the same by the federal government and other states as Californians in other valid marriages.

I strongly support your efforts to pass the Respect for Marriage Act.

Sincerely,


Edmund G. Brown Jr.

cc: Members, Committee on the Judiciary