

CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE

Dear CPA Member:

The Canadian Psychological Association agreed in November, 2003 to support Canadians for Equal Marriage in its campaign for legislation to permit same-sex couples across Canada to marry in a civil ceremony.

CPA has long called for equality for people of all sexual orientations, knowing that this will improve people's lives. In 1982, CPA endorsed the principle that there be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the education of graduate students. In 1984, CPA endorsed the policy that it is unethical to use or misuse current knowledge to imply there is scientific evidence to justify discrimination based on sexual preference. In 1996, CPA adopted a policy opposing prejudice, bias and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all areas. We see support for equal marriage is a natural extension of these policies.

Some opponents of equal marriage assert that it would be bad for children, because same-sex couples make bad parents. The psychological research into lesbian and gay parenting indicates that there are essentially no differences in the psychosocial development, gender identity or sexual orientation between the children of gay or lesbian parents and the children of heterosexual parents. We believe that all children deserve to feel that society accepts and recognizes their families, and children of same-sex couples are no exception.

We also support equal marriage because it will help reduce the stigma of homosexuality. This will reduce psychological stress and help lower the alarmingly high suicide rates of non-heterosexual teenagers compared to their heterosexual peers.

The current political situation is uncertain. Opponents have been successful in mobilizing against the legislation. Many MPs are afraid of losing votes over this issue. Paul Martin has backtracked from the Chrétien government's clear support of equal marriage. He says he supports equality in principle, but wants debate on whether any other options are viable. Any legislation will be put to a free vote, meaning that a majority of MPs must be convinced that equal marriage is the right thing to do. If equal marriage legislation is to pass, supporters must make their voices heard.

We recognize that this is a controversial issue on which CPA members, like Canadians generally, hold a variety of opinions. We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Patrick O'Neill, President
Canadian Psychological Association

Laurie Arron
Canadians for Equal Marriage



BOB GALLAGHER
National Coordinator

LAURIE ARRON
Political Coordinator

CICELY MCWILLIAM
Outreach Coordinator

www.equal-marriage.ca
www.mariageegal.ca

Ways CPA members can support Equal Marriage

By supporting the diversity of families who uphold a secure environment for nurture, growth, and development of all its members, the social fabric of the community will be strengthened, not diminished.

Lois Wilson, former United Church Moderator and CEM partner

Contact your MP

- E-mail your Member of Parliament (MP) and Paul Martin by going to www.equal-marriage.ca (don't forget the hyphen!). We automatically look up your MP. You can write your own message or choose from several pre-written ones.
- Phone calls have a bigger impact than e-mails or even letters. You can find out who your MP is and their contact information by going to www.egale.ca and clicking on "Find your MP" under the Equal Marriage links.
- Have an in-person meeting with your MP. All MPs have "constituency days" where they'll meet with you. When you call to express your support, ask for an in-person meeting as well. This is the most powerful way to show your support.

Ask your Family, Friends and Co-workers to Contact their MP

- One easy way to ask for their support is through the www.equal-marriage.ca website. Just type in their e-mail address. Their privacy is protected, as the system does not retain the e-mail addresses.

Make a Donation to Canadians for Equal Marriage (CEM)

- Successful campaigns cost money and our opponents have far greater resources than we do. It's easy to donate online through the www.equal-marriage.ca website or by mailing a cheque to our Toronto address.

Contact your local Canadians for Equal Marriage Chapter

- CEM local chapters have fact sheets, equal marriage pamphlets and other useful information.
- CEM local chapters make calls to ask established equality supporters to take action. They plan events, contact local media and distribute equal marriage materials. They are all volunteers and they need your help!

For more information, contact Cicely McWilliam at cicely@equal-marriage.ca.