



## **WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA FREEDOM TO MARRY COALITION**

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# **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Marriage Coalition condemns State House Vote on Anti-Marriage Legislation**

The Western Pennsylvania Freedom to Marry Coalition condemns Friday's premature vote in the PA House on the Egolf amendment attached to Senate Bill 434. The amendment, which passed by a vote of 177 to 16, prohibits the state from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples and would void any marriage of a same-sex couple performed in another state while the couple is in Pennsylvania.

The legislation was proposed in response to a Hawaiian court case that may make it legal for same-sex couples to marry in that state. That case is set to go to trial on September 10th of this year and no final decision is expected until 1998.

"This unnecessary legislation is election year gay-bashing," said Scott Safier, an organizer with the Western PA Freedom to Marry Coalition. "No state or Pennsylvania county will currently issue a marriage license to a same-sex couple, and a decision by the Hawaiian Supreme Court that might make it legal for same-sex couples to marry in that state is about two years off".

"The issue of same-sex marriage is a fund raising ploy of right-wing political extremist groups," says Chris Young of Pennsylvania's League of Gay and Lesbian Voters. "Organizations like the Christian Coalition are engaged in a campaign of deliberate misinformation. They are trying to take away rights gay and lesbian Americans have yet to secure."

Representative Egolf introduced a bill to bar marriage for same-sex couples in May. The bill has been referred to the Judiciary Committee and has not yet been acted on. "By rushing ahead with this legislation at this time, the Republican leadership has demonstrated that politics is driving this legislation, not the desire to enact good public policy," adds Safier.

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The Western Pennsylvania Freedom to Marry Coalition is comprised of over 25 religious, commercial, social and political groups who believe that the state should not interfere with same-sex couples who chose to share in the rights, responsibilities and commitment of civil marriage.