



## DEMONSTRATE FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY ON TAX DAY

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, as millions of Americans file their income taxes, a coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) advocacy groups are joining forces to call attention to the tax inequities facing same-sex couples as a result of being legally prohibited from marriage. Marriage Equality USA is organizing a series of events at post offices across the country to highlight the ongoing moral and financial costs of denying marriage equality same-sex couples - as well as the consequences paid to all Californians as a result of discriminatory state and federal laws. **In Sonoma County, the demonstration will take place at Santa Rosa's main post office at 730 Second Street, between D and E Streets between 5pm and 6 pm, April 15<sup>th</sup>.**

For same-sex couples, tax season begins by having to check the box labeled "single" despite potentially being together for decades. Many tax preparers are unwilling to represent our families because our marital or lack of marital status greatly complicates how to complete our tax paperwork. In addition, many same-sex couples pay tax on their health insurance, and cannot file joint federal taxes even if they file jointly in their states. And although same-sex couples pay equally into Social Security, they are denied the safety net that it provides for their families. Same-sex couples are denied many federal rights and protections, including but not limited to:

- Social security survivor benefits are denied to surviving spouses of same-sex couples.
- Employer-provided health insurance, while tax-free for married couples, is considered income and taxable.
- The right to take time off to care for a sick or injured partner is denied under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

A study produced by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) debunks the myth that granting same-sex couples the freedom to marry would cost the government money. In fact, it would save taxpayer dollars. Marriage discrimination costs all taxpayers as much as \$1 billion in lost tax revenue. To read the CBO study, visit [www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=5559&sequence=0](http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=5559&sequence=0).

The action is simple. Local media often goes out to post offices to share stories from folks dropping off their taxes at the last minute, so we can take this opportunity to share how marriage discrimination and the Defense of Marriage Act harm same-sex couples during tax season. Furthermore, we can use this visibility event to further promote public education to our local community members by distributing educational materials to taxpayers as they wait in line to drop off their taxes.

Though this is a demonstration in support of civil rights for LGBT people, please understand that this is not an adversarial event. People who engage in this activity agree to conduct themselves with dignity and friendliness, particularly during this hard economic time when tax season may be particularly stressful for some families. Done appropriately, tax day actions can be another opportunity to have the public think about the 1,138 federal and hundreds of state rights that any married couple can receive but that same-sex couples are categorically denied.

For more information:

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