



Northwest Women's Law Center

Advancing legal rights for women

July 26, 2006

Dear Law Center Supporter,

This is a sad day. But it is not the last day.

In every struggle for equality and justice, the road is long, it is often perilous, and the end sometimes seems frighteningly distant.

The Northwest Women's Law Center, our clients and our amazing colleagues brought this case because we believe in justice and in the rule of law. Our legal system is the cornerstone of democracy and guarantees freedom and equality to all people. Our courts are there to protect the rights of the individual, the powerless and the politically unpopular. That is our constitution's promise to the people of our state and our country, and today that promise was broken.

We would not have brought this case if we did not believe the Washington Constitution protected our clients' rights to marry the person of their choice. We still believe that. A plurality of the Washington Supreme Court disagrees, and because we respect our legal system, we must acknowledge today that this avenue to justice is, for now, foreclosed.

But that does not mean we will give up. It merely means that we must take a deep breath, square our shoulders and continue the struggle with firmer resolve and in other arenas. Today's decision, while a set-back in the fight for equality, strengthens our commitment to education and advocacy, as we work toward the day when all loving and committed adults in Washington, and their families, have the full rights, obligations and protections that the state's system of marriage confers. That means we must turn to the Legislature and the fair-minded people of Washington, who have so recently demonstrated that discriminating against lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender people is not acceptable in our state. We will pursue every means possible to achieve our goal of full equality, and we will not stop until we win.

Our hearts go out to the couples - the 16 people on whose behalf we brought these lawsuits and their children and families, and all the couples and families in this state - who learned today that their wedding day is delayed. I can only assure you that the Northwest Women's Law Center and all our colleagues are not finished with this fight. Not by a long shot.

Justice can be delayed, but it cannot be forever denied.

Lisa M. Stone, Executive Director