



For Immediate Release

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The Equal Rights Center Lauds Councilmember Catania's Introduction of the Marriage Equality Amendment Act

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 6, 2009 – Today, Councilmember David A. Catania (I-At Large) introduced the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009 in the D.C. Council. The Act would change current marriage law in the District to state that: "marriage is the legally recognized union of two people." Currently, the only states in which same-sex marriages are performed include Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa and Vermont, with New Hampshire to begin in January 2010. The passage of this bill would make the District of Columbia the only jurisdiction south of the Mason-Dixon Line to legalize same-sex marriage.

In response to the introduction of the bill, **Equal Rights Center (ERC) Executive Director Donald L. Kahl made the following statement:**

“For more than 30 years, the D.C. Human Rights Act has provided some of the most far-reaching civil and human rights protections in the entire country. For nearly the same amount of time, the Equal Rights Center has been advancing civil rights in the District under that Act. D.C. law expressly prohibits discrimination based on, among other things, the basis of marital status, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. The Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009, introduced by Councilmember Catania and his ten co-sponsors, advances the principals of fundamental fairness and equality that must be zealously guarded in our nation’s capital. The Equal Rights Center applauds this forward-thinking legislation and hopes it will serve as a model to the nation on how to provide dignity and respect to each individual and each couple. Until our nation can fully support and celebrate the lives, the similarities, and the uniqueness that we all possess, all of us will remain burdened by the stain of discrimination.”

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About the Equal Rights Center (www.equalrightscenter.org)

Since 1983, the Equal Rights Center (ERC), a national non-profit civil rights organization, has identified, challenged, and eliminated discrimination. The ERC fights discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and government services through education and outreach, research, testing, counseling, enforcement, and advocacy.