

Advocates for Women Support Marriage Equality for All Maine Families
Leading Women's Groups Urge No Vote on Question 1

Augusta, Maine October 9, 2009) – Advocacy organizations serving Maine women and children across the state announced their strong support for marriage equality and treating families equally under the law. The groups urging a NO vote on Question 1 include: the Maine Women's Lobby; American Association of University Women of Maine; Women, Work and Community; Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center; Family Planning Association of Maine; Planned Parenthood of Northern New England; Maine National Organization for Women; and Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence.

The Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center in Bangor emphasized that upholding the law allowing all loving and committed couples to marry will provide all Maine families the benefits that only flow from marriage such as the protection of children and property, and full access to health care and health care decision-making.

"The truth is married couples and families need these protections in times of crisis," said Ruth Lockhart, executive director of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. "Marriage ensures that a spouse can be at a hospital bedside, or that children are fully protected should one parent die. These are basic matters of fairness and that is why a NO vote on Question 1 is so important."

According to Sarah Standiford, executive director of the Maine Women's Lobby, since the 19th century, Maine marriage laws have been amended to reflect gender equality and address issues of fundamental fairness.

"The people of Maine knew that for women to be equal, they had to be equal in marriage as well. We recognize the same to be true for loving and committed lesbian and gay couples, who need full access to marriage to be truly equal under the law," said Standiford.

Several organizational leaders said the marriage law addresses the mutual, reciprocal and equal responsibilities of married couples. They added that a NO vote on Question 1 ensures that same sex couples are simply treated fairly in Maine.

"Every couple -- whether straight or gay -- deserves the dignity and respect that only marriage brings as well as all the obligations that come with it," said Charlene Geohring Fox of the American Association of University Women of Maine. "That marriage remains a vital, relevant, esteemed institution today is a tribute to the law's ability -- and Maine people's insistence -- to accommodate fairness."