

TALKING EQUALITY (Part 1)

- 1) We're defending traditional marriage.
 - a) We all support traditional marriage. In fact, marriage equality means we support opposite-sex marriage just as staunchly as we support same-sex marriage. It doesn't have to be protected or defended. No one's trying to take it away. There's only one side here trying to take away marriage rights, and it's not us.
- 2) Personally I think gay marriage is wrong.
 - a) But you didn't answer the question. You didn't tell us why you think your personal beliefs should be laws that everyone has to follow.
 - b) My parents were conservative Catholics and they thought divorce was wrong. My dad thought birth control was immoral. But they didn't take the huge leap to thinking these things should be illegal for everyone.
 - c) Natural law is usually just code for "this is what I'm used to." Decades ago smart people thought natural law said blacks and whites shouldn't mingle. The world is complex and what seems natural to one generation leaves the next thinking, "How could they believe that?" So don't talk about natural law -- it doesn't have a good record where minorities are concerned.
- 3) Settle for civil unions--all the rights without the word
 - a) You can get on the bus, you just have to sit in the back.
 - b) I know what it's like to be a gay teen in a small town, with well-meaning parents telling me how awful homosexuals are. Those gay teens are still out there, they can't change their orientation, and thousands of them call suicide hotlines every year because of what they've been taught. And settling for civil unions, what would that tell them: "Any relationship you have might have isn't good enough for marriage. Good enough for an uninspired legal phrase -- not for the real thing. Good enough to live on the awkward outskirts of our culture, but not the heart, the core, the soul of America." That's just wrong. And it's not true. They deserve better.
 - c) Whatever many rights we have, our most vocal opponents want us to have fewer. They opposed civil unions until marriage became a possibility and then civil unions became their public fallback position. But if we said, "Civil unions, okay," they'd start fighting us on that. Now some of them say, "Civil unions are a perfectly appropriate thing," but if so, why didn't they say so before?
- 4) You don't have the right to redefine marriage for everyone.
 - a) Maggie, you're working to pass laws that define -- or in some states redefine -- marriage for everyone. In a way that doesn't include everyone.
 - b) I don't think your statement makes sense. When women were fighting for the right to vote, you wouldn't have said, "You don't have the right to redefine voter for everyone." That would have been just an obvious distraction from the real issue, and it's ridiculous, but it's essentially what Maggie's doing right now.
 - c) Civil marriage involves a legal definition not a religious one, and legal definitions evolve constantly. The laws around marriage have changed again and again, and it's no use pretending they haven't, unless you think we're still in the days when women were property of the father or husband they belonged to.

- 5) Children need traditional families
 - a) That study was about divorce, not gay marriage. Your reasoning comes down to, "Divorce is tough on kids, so let's ban same-sex marriage!" Can you even make an argument without twisting the facts?
 - b) The two halves of humanity. That would be one huge wedding. However poetic that sounds, we know that marriage is about bringing together two people who want to build one home, one family, one shared life together. That's what marriage has always been, and marriage equality does nothing to change that.
 - c) Polls consistently show that people who know gays are more likely to vote for marriage equality. If there's such a gulf between gay and straight relationships, then Maggie needs to explain why straights who actually know us are less likely to think so.
 - d) You like to talk about "their own mother and father." My parents adopted my brother before I was born and if you ever tried to tell my mom that she wasn't his own mother, you'd have had one furious traditional devout Catholic woman on your hands
 - e) Let me see if I can get this right. An opposite sex couple who can't have kids and doesn't have kids is a better marriage than a lesbian couple with a biological child because marriage is about procreating, which makes the straight couple better because they could have a biological child if they could have a biological child, and they're better than a gay couple with an adopted child because marriage is about raising kids and the straight couple could raise their biological child if only they could have one. And that makes me wonder how you would rank a straight couple with an adopted child against a lesbian couple with a biological child, and now I'm feeling weird because I'm asking you to rank families you haven't even met, although you seem to be perfectly happy going on national television again and again and doing exactly that.

- 6) Gays are calling us bigots
 - a) No Maggie, we see a difference between the leaders of our opposition and the everyday Americans who are counting on them for the truth and aren't getting it. I won't call you a bigot unless you say one group is inherently better than another and deserves unique treatment because they're special.
 - b) I hear you saying that we simply can't have relationships as special as yours. I know you hate being called a bigot, and I'm not applying that term to you right now, but if it's hard to avoid the label if you go around saying our lives are inherently inferior to yours.
 - c) If you said the marriages of Christians are inherently better than those of Jews, you'd be called a bigot. And you ARE making that type of comment about gays and lesbians. When you denigrate an entire category of people, you open yourself up to that charge -- when you start creating different classes of human beings. We've had enough of that thinking in the past and we've seen the harm it can do.

- 7) Slippery Slope
 - a) Do you really not see a fundamental difference between an adult and a child, or a dog and a human? Really?
 - b) No one's allowed to marry a dog or a child or a group of people. That really would be something entirely new. I'm just asking for the right to marry a man. Half our population already has that right. You can't say that about any of your scare-tactic scenarios.
 - c) Arguments like this make it sound like tradition is the only reason we don't let people marry kids or dogs. And that's just not true.
 - i) We don't let kids marry to protect them from exploitation.

- ii) Young kids don't have the intellectual capacity to understand marriage.
- iii) Older kids and teens don't have the emotional maturity to make this kind of commitment.
- iv) And animals -- good lord, after what I just said about kids, it's hard to believe that people like Bill O'Reilly talk about people marrying goat. A goat would be more likely to eat a marriage license than to sign one.
- d) We've seen the exploitation, abuse, and sexual violence that comes with polygamy. But we haven't seen that in our national and international experience with same-sex marriage. Which sets up a great big roadblock on that alleged slippery slope.
- e) Suppose we had marriages of 10, or 100, or 100,00 people. Can current marriage laws accommodate that? Can they deal with issues like child custody, inheritance, Social Security benefits, and financial liability? No. States would have to create entirely new laws to deal with entirely new situations raised by this entirely new institution. And that's not true with same-sex marriage. In California, when it became legal, all they had to do was start issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. And that just goes to show how different same sex marriage is from polygamy.