



STATE *of* MINNESOTA
Office of Governor Mark Dayton

Freedom to Marry bill signing ceremony

May 14, 2013

Governor Dayton's remarks—as prepared for delivery

What a difference a year and an election make in Minnesota! Last year, there were concerns that marriage equality would be banned forever. Now, my signature will make it legal in two and one-half months.

First and foremost, I want to thank the people of Minnesota, who voted last year to defeat a very destructive Constitutional Amendment, and also to elect courageous legislators, who would support this monumental social advance.

I want to thank the activists, all of you here tonight and the thousands more throughout our state, who worked so long and so hard to win this extraordinary victory.

At the risk of leaving out many deserving leaders, special recognition should go to Richard Carlbon, who brilliantly masterminded last year's and this year's campaigns.

Congratulations to the chief authors, Representative Karen Clark and Senator Scott Dibble, who shepherded this bill along an often difficult path – and who have now succeeded, to the amazement of some and the delight of many.

Thank you to the House and Senate leaders: Speaker Paul Thissen, Majority Leader Tom Bakk, Majority Leader Erin Murphy, and Asst. Majority Leader Katie Sieben for supporting and guiding this legislation.

And I want to express my utmost admiration to the Republican and Democratic legislators, who voted for this bill. Many of them are standing behind me, and they deserve to hear our gratitude.

Last week, I suggested that you legislators read John F. Kennedy's book: [Profiles in Courage](#). Instead, you wrote its latest chapter.

By your political courage, you join that pantheon of exceptional leaders, who did something extraordinary – you changed the course of history for our state and our nation.

Our country's founding principle was stated 237 years ago in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

That principle was later embodied in the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution, "No State shall ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Unfortunately, our nation's founding fathers had bold aspirations, but a bad implementation. They wrongly denied those equal rights and protections to women, African-Americans, and other racial minorities.

They also left out GLBT men and women, if you believe, as I do, that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness certainly include the right to marry the person you love.

Since then, our country's most important progress has been to extend those equal rights and protections to everyone. That progress has often been difficult, controversial, and initially divisive. However, it has always been the next step ahead to fulfilling this country's promise to every American.

It is now my honor to sign into law this next step for the State of Minnesota to fulfill its promise to every Minnesotan.

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Office of the Governor, Communications Department

130 State Capitol, St. Paul, MN 55155

T: 651-201-3400 | E: Dayton.Media@state.mn.us

www.mn.gov/governor