



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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August 1, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell,

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors, we urge you to pass the bipartisan H.R. 8404, the Respect for Marriage Act. The U.S. Conference of Mayors, which has supported policies advancing civil rights since the 1960s and LGBTQ rights since 1984, calls on you to protect this fundamental freedom to marry for all our residents.

The bill, if fully enacted, would ensure that marriage equality is protected as the law of the land. Following the recent decision by the conservative majority on the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and the signal sent that other rights, like the right to same-sex and interracial marriage, are potentially under attack, this legislation will provide certainty to all the families who are at risk.

In brief, H.R. 8404 Respect for Marriage Act would:

- **Repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA):** The Supreme Court effectively rendered DOMA inert with its landmark decisions in *United States v. Windsor* and *Obergefell*. The bill would repeal this statute once and for all.
- **Enshrine Marriage Equality for Federal Law Purposes:** The bill requires, for federal law purposes, that an individual be considered married if the marriage was valid in the state where it was performed. This gives LGBTQ and interracial couples additional certainty that they will continue to enjoy equal treatment under federal law as all other married couples—as the Constitution requires.
- **Provide Additional Legal Protections from Individuals Seeking to Undermine Marriage Equality While Acting Under State Law, including for Out-of-State Marriages:** The bill prohibits any person acting under state law from denying full faith and credit to an out-of-state marriage based on the sex, race, ethnicity or national origin of the individuals in the marriage, provides the Attorney General with the authority to pursue enforcement actions, and creates a private right of action for any individual harmed by a violation of this provision.

Quick passage of this legislation is a critical step to defending the right to marry for all our residents. America's cities are the bastions of equality, opportunity, and progress. We cannot risk that couples in LGBTQ or interracial marriages could be denied the right to legal protections that other couples take for granted. America's mayors will always push back against discrimination and uplift our core values of equality and fairness.

We urge you to bring this legislation to the floor and pass it before departing for the August district work period. By doing this, you will provide much needed stability and certainty to the many families who are dependent upon these protections that safeguard them and their families. America's mayors are ready to work with the Senate to pass this law and others to ensure that Americans' rights and freedoms are always protected.

Sincerely,

Todd Gloria
Mayor of San Diego, CA
Chair, LGBTQ Alliance of The
U.S. Conference of Mayors

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

Steven Reed
Mayor of Montgomery, AL

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Mayor of Perris, CA

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Mayor of Bridgeport, CT

Lioneld Jordan
Mayor of Fayetteville, AR

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Mayor of West Hartford, CT

Corey Woods
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Mayor of San Jose, CA

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Mayor of Alameda, CA

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Mayor of Santa Monica, CA

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Mayor of Davie, FL

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Mayor of Dublin, CA

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Mayor of Racine, WI

Ryan Sorenson
Mayor of Sheboygan, WI

Katie Rosenberg
Mayor of Wausau, WI

Steve Williams
Mayor of Huntington, WV

cc. Members, The United States Senate