



**Love. Commitment. Protecting your family.  
The values we all share are why marriage matters.**

**Marriage** is unique and special. It says “we’re family” in a way that no other word can. It’s the ultimate expression of love, commitment and responsibility for one another. It provides a strong foundation for a child’s place in the world. Marriage strengthens families. And strong families make strong communities.

Marriage matters in all of these ways. That’s why committed same-sex couples hope to be able to marry one day. It’s also why more and more Oregonians are joining the effort to extend civil marriage to our gay and lesbian neighbors.

## **Why does marriage matter to committed gay and lesbian couples?**

There have been efforts – including Oregon’s domestic partnership law – to provide same-sex couples the basic protections that all other families rely on. Although they help, they fall short of the things that only marriage can provide. The ability to speak for and be with your loved one in an emergency room. A child’s knowledge that their family is as valid as other families.

There are many ways that only marriage allows you to protect and care for the people you love. Being locked out of these basic protections means real harm to real people.

## **Fairness matters too.**

It’s as basic as the golden rule: treat others as you would want to be treated. Fairness and tolerance are basic Oregon values. We honor these values when we ensure that all members of our community have the opportunity to create a family with the love, commitment and protection that only marriage can provide.



**Think about it.  
Because marriage matters.**



“Long ago we made a commitment to live together and care for each other. We’ve been together for thirty-one years of dedicated love and support. We have volunteered in the community, worked as social workers, psychotherapists and educators. And we’ve raised five kids.

We share the laundry, cooking, vacations and the happiness we wish for our children and grandchildren.

We’ve spent all these years as a family. But we are still waiting for the day when we can be recognized as a married couple.”

**Fanda Bender and Sheila Gam, Talent**

“My partner Christopher and I registered for a domestic partnership here in Oregon so we would be protected in the event of a crisis. But when Christopher was gravely ill in the hospital, and the nurse said he might be dying, I was told that I couldn’t be at his bedside to hold his hand. The hospital said I wasn’t ‘family.’

Nobody should ever be denied the right to be there for the person they love. Only marriage can provide the legal certainty that gay and lesbian couples need.”

**Patrick Halloran, Portland**



“My husband and I couldn’t be more proud of our three talented, beautiful children who have all become successful young adults.

My son Adam has been in a committed and loving relationship for several years. He and his partner even bought a home together. But unlike our two daughters, Adam can’t get married, because he’s gay.

We hope one day our son will be able to experience this ritual of love and celebrate it with his family and friends.”

**Becky Groves, Prineville**