



## **Talking Points: Equality Maryland's 2010 Lobby Day**

We have a number of important legislative initiatives. You do not have to be an expert on all of them. This document is meant to provide some talking points on a few of our key initiatives.

Don't feel like you have to use these exact words. These are simply the types of things you might want to consider talking about to help lawmakers understand why equality is important to you! But above all, talk about yourselves! Your own personal stories can be very powerful in helping others understand why this is so very important to all of us!

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us at 410-685-6567 or [info@equalitymaryland.org](mailto:info@equalitymaryland.org). We look forward to seeing you on Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>!

### ***Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act (House Bill 808, Senate Bill 582)***

→ There is no reason that allowing same-sex couples to marry would have any impact upon the marriages of opposite-sex couples.

→ Institutions are generally undermined when people leave them, not when people enter them.

→ Many parents want the right to marry because they know it offers children a vital safety net and guarantees protections that unmarried parents cannot provide.

→ Families are about love, not about narrow definitions.

### ***Gender Identity Anti-Discrimination Act (House Bill 1022, Senate Bill 583)***

→ Every person in our state deserves an equal opportunity to make a life for him or herself free from discrimination and violence.

→ Similar bills in other states have been non-controversial.

→ When unchecked, discrimination can lead to chronic unemployment and homelessness.

→ During such tough economic times, this is a no cost bill that helps keep people working and productive.

### ***Family Medical Leave Act (Delegate Heather Mizeur)***

→ Tens of millions of working people have been able to take unpaid job-protected time away from work under the *Family Medical Leave Act* when they were faced with a serious medical issue or when they needed to care for a new baby. These protections should be available for domestic partners.

→ The *Family Medical Leave Act* was a groundbreaking law that safeguards workers' rights to keep their jobs and maintain their economic security when they need it most. This bill simply acknowledges that the need to care for a sick parent or the child of a domestic partner is equally important.

***De Facto Parent (SB 600)***

→ Children deserve the continuity and security of having lasting relationships with those who parent them.

→ While adults may change their minds about who they wish to co-parent a child with, the law should operate to protect the parent-child relationships upon which children have come to rely for their security and well-being.

***Same Sex Marriages - Foreign Jurisdictions – Invalidity (SB 852)***

→ The Attorney General's office is currently considering an official opinion as to whether Maryland should honor legal out of state same-sex marriages. This bill would prevent the enforcement of a positive opinion, thereby creating yet another area of law in which we are discriminated against.

→ A positive opinion would rely on well established legal precedent that says couples who have been legally married in another state should be treated as fully married, even if that marriage would be illegal if conducted in the State of Maryland.

→ By concluding that Maryland should honor marriages of same-sex couples that are legally performed in another jurisdiction, the Attorney General is simply following the law. Maryland has long recognized the legal marriages of couples that marry out of state.