

# A Gay Marriage Proposal

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Politicians are scrambling to define the word marriage itself, and fighting to make gay marriage legal or illegal, but here's a better way.

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Gay marriage is a divisive issue. Some groups are fighting to make it legal, others are fighting to make it illegal, and some people just don't know what to think about it all. But there is a solution, which may be radical, but will make all the arguments irrelevant. Here it is:

Get Rid Of "Legal" Marriage Altogether!

{bot\_wrgoogle}Marriage has many definitions, and they are changing fast now that it's an important political question. Many traditional definitions use the words "between a man and a woman," which certainly seems to exclude gays. Some simply call it an, "an intimate or close union over time." Wikipedia's definition is:

"Marriage is an interpersonal relationship with governmental, social, or religious recognition, usually intimate and sexual, and often created as a contract, or through civil process. Civil marriage is the legal concept of marriage."

"Marriage" here is distinguished from "civil marriage," which makes sense, right? The reality existed long before a governmental "license" was required after all. It started long ago with various, mostly religious, ceremonies. Whatever rituals were involved, it was (and is) a way for the union of two people to be recognized by the group to which they belonged, whether this was religious or social.

Given that it was here before the "laws" why does government have to be involved in any case? It doesn't need to be! We can let people have whatever ceremonies they want, call this whatever they want, and live how they want as long as they don't hurt others, right? And by the way, doesn't anyone else besides myself find it offensive that we should need "permission" of a government to marry?

Marriage - Gay, Straight and Whatever

We would need some changes in the tax code perhaps, to treat all taxpayers the same. Why was there ever a penalty or reward for marriage anyhow? As free individuals with equal rights, governments never should have started treating us differently according to our religious or other ceremonial unions.

Even without legally-sanctioned marriage, the essential principles of divorce would be similar. Courts already recognize that people who live together without that permission slip, or marriage "license" need to fairly divide their assets when separating. As always, any two people who combine assets may need a civil court to assist in the division of them when they go their separate ways.

What about children? Never mind what we call family arrangements. Think only about the good of the children. People will always live together, but HOW they raise their children is more important than whether they call their union a marriage or something else. When couples separate, courts should simply arrange things in the best interest of the children.

Incidentally, some may think that the "legal" nature of marriage makes for stronger families - better for children, but this is a very cynical view of people's commitments, without any real evidence for it.

Other marriage "benefits" are not such a problem either. With social security (and perhaps life insurance), the simple solution is to let individuals designate the beneficiary of their choice. Was it ever fair that a married man gets potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars additional money paid out to his spouse, while a single man doesn't get that extra

benefit? Both pay the same taxes.

Private companies could decide what kind of health insurance plans they want for health insurance. Most likely, they'll see the market advantage of providing insurance that allows the employee to designate other beneficiaries. Limit coverage to certain religiously designated unions (remember, there will be no more civil or "legal" marriage) and they'll find it harder to attract good workers. (For the skeptical among you, I have to point out that I know of companies where men openly dress as women, showing that companies will change when they find it advantageous.)

When governments don't define marriage, or decide who has "permission" to marry, naturally the issue of gay marriage is gone (at least from politics). When two men, two women, or a man and a woman want to join their lives together, they can do so in any church that will have them, or by any rituals or ceremonies they want. Gay or not, they can call it marriage or use any other word they choose, because it's nobody else's business.

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