



Minnesota House of Representatives

April 27, 2011

Mr. David Olson
President, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
400 Robert Street North Suite 1500
Saint Paul MN 55101

Mr. Charlie Weaver
Executive Director, Minnesota Business Partnership
3530 IDS Center
Minneapolis MN 55402

Dear Mr. Olson and Mr. Weaver:

This week, members of the Minnesota House and Senate introduced legislation to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot in 2012 to prohibit same-sex marriage in Minnesota. These legislators have indicated that they plan to pass this legislation in the final four weeks of the 2011 legislative session.

Aside from the discrimination and unfair treatment this proposed amendment represents, and the questionable timing of introducing this bill before the legislature has passed a balanced budget, the business implications of this amendment are troubling.

In Minnesota, 70% of Fortune 500 companies offer domestic partnership benefits to same-sex couples and families. Nearly every company in Minnesota whose brand is well known offers these benefits, with a total of more than 290 Minnesota employers offering domestic partner benefits.

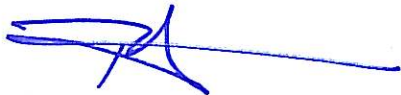
Minnesota's economy relies on a talented, educated workforce. The ability to recruit individuals with these qualities is crucial for our state's businesses. In the United States, more than twenty states and metropolitan jurisdictions that compete economically with Minnesota recognize same-sex couples and families, and fourteen offer full recognition of these families' rights. Of course Minnesota's businesses compete globally—and thirty nine countries offer full recognition of same-sex couples' rights.

In this competitive environment, Minnesota businesses will be harmed if a prohibition on marriage equality is made part of our constitution. We write to request your leadership in stopping this misguided proposal. Minnesota's business leaders have understandably weighed in on tax and

regulation issues that affect Minnesota's competitiveness. Similarly, we ask that you send a strong message to the Legislature that the same-sex marriage amendment is bad for business. We also ask that if such a proposal is passed and placed on the ballot, that you publicly oppose it with your voices and your resources.

When large employers in Indiana and Washington stood up for inclusive policies, inclusive policies won. You have the unique capacity to make Minnesota a state that is open for business and employment for all people. Please help keep Minnesota moving in the right direction.

Sincerely,



Ryan Winkler
State Representative

Steve Piman

Sean Wagonias

Phyllis Kahn

Carl Meini

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Noah Law

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CC: Minnesota Chamber Board Members
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