

Minnesota Atheists Public Policy on GLBT Rights

Minnesota Atheists supports equal rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation. This support is based on two rules of law:

1) The Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states "...nor shall any State... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Thus the Equal Protection Clause demands that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) citizens be treated the same under the law as heterosexual citizens.

2a) The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Secular laws must have a secular basis.

Any law that would reduce the rights of any class of citizens must have a secular justification. There is no secular reason to deny equal rights and equal protection under the law due to a person's sexual orientation.

2b) The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Religious tenets for which the only basis is belief in the supernatural should not become civil law. To turn such religious tenets into civil law is to create a theocracy.

Religious arguments against equal rights and equal protection under the law for GLBT people are based solely on belief in a particular type of god who advocates limiting such rights and protections. As we cannot demonstrate that this god exists, much less confirm its instructions to humanity, we cannot base any secular laws on this supernatural belief.

The Principle of Equality in Practice

Minnesota Atheists' support for equal rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation includes, but is not limited to, the equal right to a civil marriage, with all the accompanying benefits and responsibilities; equal rights to fertility treatments and adoption; the right to openly identify one's sexual orientation and serve in the military; and the equal right not to be discriminated against in employment and housing.

Minnesota Atheists Public Policy on GLBT Rights

Minnesota Atheists supports equal rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation. This support is based on two rules of law:

1) The Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states "...nor shall any State... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Thus the Equal Protection Clause demands that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) citizens be treated the same under the law as heterosexual citizens.

2a) The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Secular laws must have a secular basis.

Any law that would reduce the rights of any class of citizens must have a secular justification. There is no secular reason to deny equal rights and equal protection under the law due to a person's sexual orientation.

2b) The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Religious tenets for which the only basis is belief in the supernatural should not become civil law. To turn such religious tenets into civil law is to create a theocracy.

Religious arguments against equal rights and equal protection under the law for GLBT people are based solely on belief in a particular type of god who advocates limiting such rights and protections. As we cannot demonstrate that this god exists, much less confirm its instructions to humanity, we cannot base any secular laws on this supernatural belief.

The Principle of Equality in Practice

Minnesota Atheists' support for equal rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation includes, but is not limited to, the equal right to a civil marriage, with all the accompanying benefits and responsibilities; equal rights to fertility treatments and adoption; the right to openly identify one's sexual orientation and serve in the military; and the equal right not to be discriminated against in employment and housing.

Minnesota Atheists Public Policy on GLBT Rights

Minnesota Atheists supports equal rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation. This support is based on two rules of law:

1) The Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states "...nor shall any State... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Thus the Equal Protection Clause demands that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) citizens be treated the same under the law as heterosexual citizens.

2a) The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Secular laws must have a secular basis.

Any law that would reduce the rights of any class of citizens must have a secular justification. There is no secular reason to deny equal rights and equal protection under the law due to a person's sexual orientation.

2b) The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Religious tenets for which the only basis is belief in the supernatural should not become civil law. To turn such religious tenets into civil law is to create a theocracy.

Religious arguments against equal rights and equal protection under the law for GLBT people are based solely on belief in a particular type of god who advocates limiting such rights and protections. As we cannot demonstrate that this god exists, much less confirm its instructions to humanity, we cannot base any secular laws on this supernatural belief.

The Principle of Equality in Practice

Minnesota Atheists' support for equal rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation includes, but is not limited to, the equal right to a civil marriage, with all the accompanying benefits and responsibilities; equal rights to fertility treatments and adoption; the right to openly identify one's sexual orientation and serve in the military; and the equal right not to be discriminated against in employment and housing.

The Equal Right to Civil Marriage

A well-known example in which GLBT people are denied equal rights is in marriage. In the United States, marriage is both a civil (government) institution and a religious institution. Often the ceremonies are performed simultaneously. The religious leader may say, "And now, by the power invested in me by the state, and before the eyes of God, I pronounce you married." This mixing of church and state has led to much confusion between the two types of marriage.

Minnesota Atheists suggests separating religious marriage from civil marriage. Religious marriage would remain private. Religious institutions would decide the parameters of their own religious ceremonies (if they chose to offer such ceremonies at all). Due to the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, religions are free to discriminate in their private religious marriage ceremonies on any basis they please.

For example, Catholic priests could refuse to re-marry divorced people. Orthodox Jewish rabbis could refuse to marry interfaith couples. Protestant ministers could refuse to marry interracial couples. They could all decide not to marry same gender couples.

However, the government should not be free to discriminate in the civil marriage contract it offers couples. Thus the government should not deny a marriage license to couples that are divorced, of different faiths, of different races, or who are the same gender.

Minnesota Atheists takes no position as to the name the state uses for civil marriage, so long as the same name, and only that name, applies to both same-gender and opposite-gender couples.

So, for example, religions could be allowed to keep the word "marriage" for their private, religious ceremonies. The state could adopt a different term for civil marriage, such as "civil union" or "domestic partnership."

Thus it would be possible for a person to have both a religion-recognized "marriage" and a state-recognized "civil union." Clergy performing private religious "marriages" would be free to choose to have those "marriages" also be recognized as state "civil unions," provided they met state guidelines.

The Equal Right to Civil Marriage

A well-known example in which GLBT people are denied equal rights is in marriage. In the United States, marriage is both a civil (government) institution and a religious institution. Often the ceremonies are performed simultaneously. The religious leader may say, "And now, by the power invested in me by the state, and before the eyes of God, I pronounce you married." This mixing of church and state has led to much confusion between the two types of marriage.

Minnesota Atheists suggests separating religious marriage from civil marriage. Religious marriage would remain private. Religious institutions would decide the parameters of their own religious ceremonies (if they chose to offer such ceremonies at all). Due to the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, religions are free to discriminate in their private religious marriage ceremonies on any basis they please.

For example, Catholic priests could refuse to re-marry divorced people. Orthodox Jewish rabbis could refuse to marry interfaith couples. Protestant ministers could refuse to marry interracial couples. They could all decide not to marry same gender couples.

However, the government should not be free to discriminate in the civil marriage contract it offers couples. Thus the government should not deny a marriage license to couples that are divorced, of different faiths, of different races, or who are the same gender.

Minnesota Atheists takes no position as to the name the state uses for civil marriage, so long as the same name, and only that name, applies to both same-gender and opposite-gender couples.

So, for example, religions could be allowed to keep the word "marriage" for their private, religious ceremonies. The state could adopt a different term for civil marriage, such as "civil union" or "domestic partnership."

Thus it would be possible for a person to have both a religion-recognized "marriage" and a state-recognized "civil union." Clergy performing private religious "marriages" would be free to choose to have those "marriages" also be recognized as state "civil unions," provided they met state guidelines.

The Equal Right to Civil Marriage

A well-known example in which GLBT people are denied equal rights is in marriage. In the United States, marriage is both a civil (government) institution and a religious institution. Often the ceremonies are performed simultaneously. The religious leader may say, "And now, by the power invested in me by the state, and before the eyes of God, I pronounce you married." This mixing of church and state has led to much confusion between the two types of marriage.

Minnesota Atheists suggests separating religious marriage from civil marriage. Religious marriage would remain private. Religious institutions would decide the parameters of their own religious ceremonies (if they chose to offer such ceremonies at all). Due to the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, religions are free to discriminate in their private religious marriage ceremonies on any basis they please.

For example, Catholic priests could refuse to re-marry divorced people. Orthodox Jewish rabbis could refuse to marry interfaith couples. Protestant ministers could refuse to marry interracial couples. They could all decide not to marry same gender couples.

However, the government should not be free to discriminate in the civil marriage contract it offers couples. Thus the government should not deny a marriage license to couples that are divorced, of different faiths, of different races, or who are the same gender.

Minnesota Atheists takes no position as to the name the state uses for civil marriage, so long as the same name, and only that name, applies to both same-gender and opposite-gender couples.

So, for example, religions could be allowed to keep the word "marriage" for their private, religious ceremonies. The state could adopt a different term for civil marriage, such as "civil union" or "domestic partnership."

Thus it would be possible for a person to have both a religion-recognized "marriage" and a state-recognized "civil union." Clergy performing private religious "marriages" would be free to choose to have those "marriages" also be recognized as state "civil unions," provided they met state guidelines.