

This week the New York legislature voted to establish marriage equality in their state and Governor Cuomo signed the bill into law. This means that New York joins six other states in establishing complete equality for same-sex marriages under state law. We can also celebrate the fact that the state of Illinois, while not offering complete marriage equality, has afforded the protection of civil union to same-sex couples. Unfortunately, these state laws do not afford true equality under the law because of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits same-sex couples from enjoying over 1,000 federal rights and privileges that are afforded to straight married couples.

Our UUA President, Peter Morales, has called on us to work toward the repeal of the so-called Defense of Marriage Act and to do whatever we can to lift up the fact that many loving families in the U.S. are not treated like families at all. This is an issue of civil rights and common human decency.

Want to do something? You can join many members of this congregation on the DeKalb County courthouse lawn on July 15th. You'll find flyers about the event in your bulletins this morning. We'll be celebrating eight couples who are applying for civil union licenses that afternoon. It's worth celebrating, but we'll also be lifting up the inadequacy of this "separate but equal" arrangement. Just like the "separate but equal" protections offered to African Americans in the first half of the last century, a state-recognized civil union is not really equal. It's just separate. Come out on July 15th to celebrate AND to stand on the side of love.