

Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry Launches, Gives Voice to Growing Number of Conservatives Who Support Marriage for Same-Sex Couples

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WASHINGTON, July 10, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today, Freedom to Marry, the campaign to win marriage nationwide, is launching *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry*, a new campaign to highlight and build support for the freedom to marry among young people across America who identify as conservative. The campaign launch will take place at a kickoff event in Washington, D.C.

"Freedom and family are core conservative values," said conservative commentator, political strategist, and media personality Margaret Hoover, who is a member of the *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* leadership committee. "We have a historic opportunity to reaffirm these important values by supporting the fundamental freedom to marry for all Americans. Now is the time for a rising generation of voters and leaders to embrace these virtues and join *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry*."

Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry is part of Freedom to Marry's campaign to demonstrate the broad and growing support for marriage across the ideological spectrum. Members of the group will make the case that the freedom to marry should not be a partisan question, and that supporting the freedom to marry fulfills basic conservative values of responsibility and community, as well as limited government and individual freedom.

Members of *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* will work to encourage more conservatives to stand up, speak out and support the freedom to marry by joining and adding new perspectives and experiences to the national conversation about marriage. They will work to end laws in the states that bar same-sex couples from marriage, as well as to repeal the so-called *Defense of Marriage Act*.

"As Republicans we believe in limited government and we believe that the best way for the federal government to spur growth and jobs is to get out of the way and let small and medium businesses thrive," said Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who is speaking at the launch event and is a Republican co-sponsor of the *Respect for Marriage Act*. "We also believe in equality of opportunity rather than of outcome. Most importantly, we believe that the individual and the family are the central engines in our society. The right for individuals to lead their lives without government intrusion is a bedrock conservative principle and it is much more than just about sexual orientation. It is about the

fundamental rights we all share as Americans, it is about equality for all with no exceptions."

"The center of political gravity has shifted for good," said Marc Solomon, National Campaign Director of Freedom to Marry. "The freedom to marry is fast becoming a bipartisan value embraced by all Americans who believe that love and commitment deserve support and protection. Freedom to Marry applauds this group of young conservatives for standing up to make the case."

Support for the freedom to marry has been accelerating at historically dramatic rates and has grown in every group, including right-of-center voters. A March poll by NBC/Wall Street Journal shows that among Republicans, support for the freedom to marry has grown by 41%, and among moderates, by 40%, since 2009. A May poll by ABC News/Washington Post shows that 46% of self-identified Republicans aged 18-44 are in favor of the freedom to marry. In March, the overwhelmingly Republican-controlled New Hampshire House voted down repeal of the state's popular freedom to marry law, with a majority of the GOP voting against repeal. Last year, the GOP-led state Senate in New York advanced a freedom to marry law. A [memo](#) by Republican pollster Jan van Lohuizen highlights that "opinion is shifting across the board, including among Republicans."

The kickoff event will feature members of the *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* leadership committee discussing their support for the freedom to marry.

"As a conservative, I find efforts to exclude same-sex couples from marriage to be both wrong and completely off-task," says Craig Stowell, an Operation Iraqi Freedom Marine Corps veteran and a member of the *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* leadership committee. "I take freedom seriously and want my best friend and brother, who is gay, to have the same freedom as everyone else to marry the person he loves. I hope *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* will inspire other conservatives to do what is right and support loving and committed same-sex couples' freedom to marry."

"The more we think about and talk about this with other conservatives, the more we can understand why the denial of marriage to same-sex couples is wrong," adds Torrey Shearer, a government relations professional in Washington, D.C. and a member of the *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* leadership committee. "Marriage strengthens families, encourages shared responsibility, and promotes stability in our communities. There is really significant change taking place among conservatives - especially young conservatives - about the freedom to marry, and I hope my involvement in this campaign will accelerate our progress."

Members of the *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry* Leadership Committee include Hoover, Stowell, and Shearer, as well as:

- Tyler Deaton, a lobbyist, political consultant, and Secretary and Finance Chairman of the New Hampshire Young Republicans and the Executive Director of New Hampshire Republicans for Freedom

- and Equality;
- Nicole Neily, Vice President of Dezenhall Resources and the former Executive Director of the Independent Women's Forum;
 - Madeline Koch, a Manager of Government Affairs for Comcast in St. Paul, MN, former staffer at the Republican National Convention, and former press intern for former Republican Senator Norm Coleman;
 - Jason Kuznicki, a Research Fellow at the Cato Institute and editor of Cato Unbound;
 - Sarah Longwell, Vice President at Berman and Company, a communications firm in Washington, D.C. that defends free market principles;
 - and Will Rinehart, a Research Fellow at TechFreedom and former Koch Summer Fellow at the Progress and Freedom Foundation.

For more information on *Young Conservatives for the Freedom to Marry*, visit <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/pages/young-conservatives-for-the-freedom-to-marry>.

Freedom to Marry is the campaign to win marriage nationwide. We are pursuing our [Roadmap to Victory](#) by working to win the freedom to marry in more states, grow the national majority for marriage, and end federal marriage discrimination. We partner with individuals and organizations across the country to end the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage and the protections, responsibilities, and commitment that marriage brings.

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