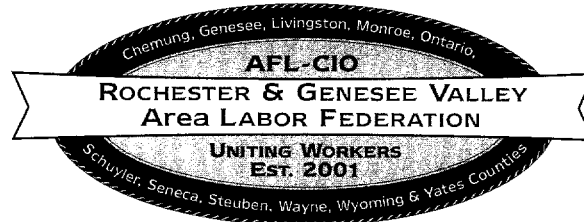


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Honorable Joseph Robach  
State Senator, 56th District  
2300 West Ridge Rd.  
Rochester, NY 14626

May 29, 2009

The Senator Robach,

The attached resolution has become policy of the New York State AFL-CIO. Marriage Equality is a Labor and Civil Rights issue, which has achieved a consensus of support in Labor. Civil Unions deny many rights to our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.

As with Plessy vs. Ferguson, separate is not equal. I have supported a conservatism my whole life supported by the Founding Fathers, particularly Jefferson, which meant the State had no right to limit the freedom and rights of the people, and religion has no place in government. The rights of the people may only be limited by those we elect through laws that apply to all equally. The only other limitation is for the conviction of a crime for which certain rights or freedoms may be taken away.

Our Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgendered Brothers and Sisters heartfelt relationships commit no crime, and no one may limit their rights, period. Those who do not see the light on this issue will be on the wrong and shameful side of history, as those who were against civil rights and women's rights are now rightly categorized by history.

As someone representing Labor that has supported and worked for your re-election many times, I urge you not only to support Marriage Equality in the Senate, but to champion it. This is not an issue of political parties, but an issue of right and wrong.

I would also appreciate the opportunity to speak to you personally on this issue. Thank you for having an open mind.

Sincerely,

James V. Bertolone, President  
Rochester and Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO  
Member of the Executive Council, New York State AFL-CIO