



Associated Musicians of Greater New York

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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Marriage Equality

S.4401 (Duane, et al.)/A. 7732 (O'Donnell, et al.)

Local 802, American Federation of Musicians (AFL-CIO), largest local union of professional musicians in the world, supports S.4401 (Duane)/A.7732 (O'Donnell). This legislation would allow same-sex couples the same opportunity to marry as opposite-sex couples and to enjoy all the rights and benefits conferred upon legally married couples. There are already more than 50,000 legally recognized same sex couples that live in New York. New York should take one step further and join the ranks of at least five other states and Canada and make same-sex marriage legal.

Local 802 AFM represents 9,000 professional musicians working throughout the five boroughs of New York City, Westchester, Long Island, and the surrounding area. Our members include the orchestral musicians who perform at Lincoln Center, the Broadway pit musicians, the freelance and Jazz musicians who perform in the other musical venues in and around New York, recording musicians, and the musicians that compose and record film scores. New York is the music capital of the world and the artists who make it so are members of Local 802.

Local 802 AFM strongly supports the equal treatment of persons under the law and allowing them the right to marry. As a union, our members have a variety of views about marriage according to their personal or religious beliefs. It is a fundamental, uniting principle of the labor movement that all people are entitled to equal rights. Without access to a legal marriage, LGBT working families are deprived of benefits and responsibilities afforded to heterosexual families, such as:

- Spousal Social Security and pension benefits;
- Medical decision-making authority;
- Workers' compensation death benefits;
- The ability to jointly adopt children, and the presumption of parenthood of children born to spouses;
- Immigration rights; and
- Many other federal, state and local protections, including rights in the workplace.

There is no legal mechanism for protecting families that is widely accepted or has clear legal precedent and meaning as marriage does. This legislation would allow LGBT families to receive that protection and the rights and benefits they deserve. For these reasons, L.802 AFM strongly supports S.4401/A.7732 and urges its enactment into law.

Bill Dennison
Recording Vice-President
Local 802 AFM



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