

PRESS RELEASE

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API EQUALITY HERALDS CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT'S RULING IN MARRIAGE EQUALITY LAWSUITS

Ruling on California *Marriage Cases* ensures that couples in a trusting and committed relationship enjoy the dignity and support that marriage provides

SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008— The California Supreme Court today ruled in a historic 4 – 3 decision that same-sex couples in a trusting, loving, and committed relationship will be able to enjoy the freedom to marry.

API Equality and its coalitions of supporters are thrilled by this momentous Supreme Court decision, which is a victory for all Californians who cherish fairness and equality, and will ensure that every Californian will enjoy the dignity and respect that marriage provides.

The positive ruling will impact thousands of Asian Pacific American families in the state. According to a study by the UCLA's Williams Institute, Asian Pacific Americans form a highly visible portion of California's population of same-sex couples and their children. Although the numbers are difficult to ascertain, a low estimate indicates there are at least 13,000 Asian Pacific American same-sex couples living in the state. Over 5,600 children are currently being raised by these couples.

“Sixty years ago, the California Supreme Court overturned the ban on interracial marriage that allowed my parents, who were an interracial couple, to be married,” said Stuart Gaffney, one of the plaintiffs in the case who is Asian Pacific American. “Today, the California Supreme Court has once again stood up for equality and proven that the law must treat all Californians fairly. After waiting for 21 years, I will finally be allowed to marry my partner, John Lewis.”

Last September, a broad coalition of over 60 local, state, and national Asian Pacific American organizations filed a groundbreaking amicus (“friend of the court”) brief in support of the plaintiffs in the *Marriage Cases*, a case before the California Supreme Court challenging the state's marriage statute. The coalition of Asian Pacific American organizations sought to support basic fairness for same-sex couples and their families, drawing from parallel discriminatory efforts targeting the Asian American community, including the its past struggle with marriage discrimination in California. That so many Asian Pacific American organizations joined the brief is a powerful reflection of the growing support for marriage equality in the Asian Pacific American community.

“We are thrilled by today's victory and we want to thank the many Asian Pacific American organizations for their support in filing the amicus brief in support of the case to guarantee fairly and equality for all Californians. Now our fight will be to preserve this win in November, where there will likely be an initiative to overturn this breakthrough,” said Amos Lim, Community Organizer, API Equality

“Today, I am proud to be a Californian. The California Supreme Court clearly recognized every Californian's right to marry the person of his or her choice and the decision is a victory for everyone who values basic fairness and civil rights,” said Vincent Pan, Executive Director, Chinese for Affirmative Action.

API Equality is committed to working in our Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities for equal marriage rights, fair treatment, and overall acceptance of LGBT people. Working in collaboration with our local partners, API Equality-LA and API Equality-SF, we engage in public education, community organizing, and legal and legislative advocacy to achieve our goals. Website: www.apiequality.org

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