



ASA NEWS

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ASA Files Amicus Brief with U.S. Supreme Court in Same-Sex Marriage Cases *Research Shows Parents' Sexual Orientation Has No Bearing on Children's Well-Being*

WASHINGTON, DC, February 28, 2013 — The American Sociological Association (ASA) weighed in on the gay marriage cases before the U.S. Supreme Court today, filing an amicus brief outlining social science research that shows “children fare just as well” when raised by same-sex or heterosexual parents.

“The results of our review are clear,” said ASA President Cecilia Ridgeway. “There is no evidence that children with parents in stable same-sex or opposite-sex relationships differ in terms of well-being. Indeed, the greater stability offered by marriage for same-sex as well as opposite-sex parents may be an asset for child well-being.”

Founded in 1905, the ASA has more than 14,000 members and a long history of presenting the consensus research findings of sociologists to American courts for their use in evaluating evidence and legal issues. In March, the U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear cases on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which denies federal recognition of same-sex marriages already legalized under the law of several states, and Proposition 8, which revoked the right of same-sex couples to marry in California.

“An issue at the heart of these cases is whether family composition, per se, affects the well-being of children and thus, provides a justification for limiting the right to marry,” said Ridgeway, the Lucie Stern Professor of Social Sciences in the Sociology Department at Stanford University. “This core question is an empirical one and is the subject of a broad range of social science research. As a scientific body, ASA has a duty to provide the court with a systematic and balanced review of the evidence to assess what the consensus of scholarly research has shown.”

In their briefs to the court, the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group of the U.S. House of Representatives, which is defending DOMA, the Hollingsworth Petitioners, which are defending Proposition 8, and their respective supporters assert that children fare better with opposite-sex parents than with same-sex parents.

“When the social science evidence is exhaustively examined—which the ASA has done—the facts demonstrate that children fare just as well when raised by same-sex parents,” states the ASA amicus brief. “Unsubstantiated fears regarding same-sex child rearing do not overcome these facts and do not justify upholding DOMA and Proposition 8.”

Wendy Diane Manning, Professor of Sociology, Director of the Center for Family & Demographic Research, and Co-Director of the National Center for Family and Marriage Research at Bowling Green State University, led ASA’s examination of the social science evidence. Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP of New York City served as counsel to the ASA on the brief.

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About the American Sociological Association

The American Sociological Association (www.asanet.org), founded in 1905, is a non-profit membership association dedicated to serving sociologists in their work, advancing sociology as a science and profession, and promoting the contributions to and use of sociology by society.