

# UnitedforMarriage

*Light the Way to Justice*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MARRIAGE EQUALITY RALLY (CONNECTICUT)**

**HARTFORD, CT – MARCH 25** People are gathering across America for 150 events in all 50 states and D.C. to show their support for marriage equality. What they have in common is that they're part of the United for Marriage: Light the Way to Justice Coalition.

Here in the Nutmeg state, Marriage Equality Rally (CT) takes place on Monday, March 25, from 6-8 p.m. at the Abraham Ribicoff Federal Courthouse located at 450 Main Street in Hartford. This peaceful, grassroots, local rally happens the night before the Supreme Court of the United States hears oral arguments on Proposition 8 and the so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

Marriage Equality Rally (CT) stands on the side of civil marriage rights as the nation's highest court weighs the constitutionality of institutionalized discrimination by states and the federal government against LGBT Americans.

"Last week when paying my taxes and medical bills, our tax burden was higher by over \$10,000, and we cannot use my pre-taxed dollars in a flexible spending account to pay for my husband's medical expenses," said Stephen Thomas, President of the Connecticut Stonewall Speakers. "This may all seem like 'only' monetary issues. They are not. Each time we are faced with this reality, it implies my relationship of twenty plus years is less valid than someone else's."

In his historic testimony before the Senate, Andrew Sorbo states: "Our happiness in marriage was tempered by our sorrow that the federal government refused to recognize it. Colin and I were fully aware that his death would jeopardize my financial security. Once he died, I might be forced to sell our beloved home—an eventuality that in fact proved necessary... I quickly discovered that my legal Connecticut marriage license was paper thin in the eyes of the federal government."

Speakers will include Rev. Aaron Miller of the Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford; Janet Peck, a plaintiff in the court case that won marriage equality in Connecticut; Andrew Sorbo, who testified before the Senate on the Respect for Marriage Act, which could repeal DOMA; Anne Stanback, the Board Chair of Freedom to Marry Action; Evelyn Mantilla, first elected official in the nation to come out as a bisexual and serve as first Latina Deputy Majority Leader of the House of Representatives; Kelvin Roldan, Chief Institutional Advancement Officer for Hartford Public Schools and former State Representative, introducing Evelyn Mantilla; Mary Ann Handley, President of the Unitarian Universalist Society: East in Manchester, and former

State Senator; Miguel Gonzalez, Health Educator/HIV counselor for Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, and Troy Ray, Case Manager/Health Educator for HGLHC; Robin McHaelen, Founder and Executive Director of True Colors; Frank O’Gorman, Queer Christian faith-based non-violent activist; Stephen Thomas, President of CT Stonewall Speakers, and many others.

All are invited to join the pre-rally march that leaves from Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford at 155 Wyllys Street in Hartford. Marchers gather at 5:30 p.m. for the short walk to the Federal Building and are encouraged to bring signs and plan to chant along the streets of Hartford.

A rain date is set for Tuesday, March 26, 6-8 p.m. Attendees can find information and RSVP at the Marriage Equality Rally (CT) Facebook event page and <http://www.csandage.com/marriage-equality-rally-ct>.

The event organizer, Chivas Sandage, is an LGBTQ author, blogger, and activist. Event Co-Organizers and Partner Organizations are: Mary Panke, a Unitarian Universalist; the Rev. Aaron Miller of Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford; Heather Rumore, Coordinator and Board member for CT Stonewall Speakers; Marianne Murawski, former NYPD detective and member of the Gay Officers Action League (GOAL); Heather Sinclair, Program Assistant for the University of Connecticut’s Study Abroad Program; Linda Estabrook, Executive Director for the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, and Dan Millett, Development Coordinator at HGLHC; and the Rev. Daniel Rodriguez Schlorff, Convener of the Fairfield-Westchester Coalition of Welcoming Congregations.

Marriage Equality Rally (CT) is part of the United for Marriage: Light the Way to Justice Coalition. To get involved with another community event happening in the U.S. or attend the rally that takes place outside the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. on March 26-27, go to <http://www.lighttojustice.org>.

**Marriage Equality Rally (CT) is a local grassroots collaboration between Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) organizations, individuals, couples, families, allies and communities here in Connecticut that support same-sex marriage and believe all citizens deserve to be treated fairly and equally under the law.**

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