



Great Public Schools
for Every Student

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July 18, 2022

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of NEA, who teach and nurture 50 million students throughout our nation, we urge you to vote YES on the Respect for Marriage Act (H.R. 8404), which would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure couples in same-sex and interracial marriages the same legal protections that other couples enjoy. Votes on this issue may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 117th Congress.

The educators of NEA believe all families should be valued and protected. Our nation took a dramatic step forward in 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld marriage equality. However, the *Dobbs* decision and Justice Thomas' concurring opinion—which signaled that rulings on marriage equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and contraception could be next—represented an attack on Constitutional rights that are deeply rooted in the promise of America. This means that fundamental civil liberties, including our freedom to love, marry, and raise a family with the partner of our choosing, are at risk.

The Respect for Marriage Act would:

- Require states to recognize marriages if they were valid in the states where they were performed; and
- Preserve state and federal benefits for these marriages if the courts should open the door to legislation that would prohibit them.

Our hard-won progress at the federal level and in many states to ensure that equality extends to all resulted from generations of struggle, and the fight continues. However, it is clear that the majority on the Supreme Court will not only stand in the way of progress, but could overturn precedents in an effort to *reverse* progress.

The U.S. Supreme Court's majority is moving in a disturbing direction; in this climate, we simply cannot take the chance that couples in same-sex or interracial marriages could be denied the right to legal protections that other couples take for granted—protections that safeguard them and their families. Discrimination against same-sex or interracial couples violates our core American values of equality and fairness. Please vote YES on the Respect for Marriage Act.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association