

# Learn more about the hot air blowing in from Hawaii.....

## Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force Reacts to "Aloha, Vermont Friends"

BY SANDI COTE

There's been a lot of consternation expressed over the statewide mailing from a Hawaiian group opposed to same-gender marriage. That a group from Ohio would spend \$40,000 to try to influence Vermonters has ignited the indignation of all our fair-minded citizens — not just the gay community. The day after this letter appeared in our mailboxes, a magical phenomenon happened. The letter had apparently so incensed both Michael Obuchowski, the Speaker of the House, and Douglas Racine, the Lieutenant Governor, that they felt compelled to publicly declare their support for same-gender marriage.

These two courageous men didn't just talk to each other and their families about how they felt — they went on record on the front page of nearly every newspaper statewide. In doing so, they disregarded the impact their stance might have on their political careers, and they ignored the glut of abusive phone calls and letters they were sure to receive. In short, they showed true moral courage and leadership. Their support for same-gender marriage is an endorsement for equal rights for the entire gay community.

Other public officials who believe that all Vermonters should be entitled to equal protections, supports, and responsibilities regardless of their sexual orientation, but who have worried about taking a public stand before the Supreme Court makes a ruling, will watch to see how much public outcry there is over Racine and Obuchowski's endorsement of same-gender marriage. They'll be watching the newspapers, expecting to see both editorials and letters to the editor denouncing Racine and Obuchowski. And they'll be watching to see how much hate mail these two men receive.

The Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force recommends that to demonstrate your indignation over the Hawaii letter, publicly support both Racine and Obuchowski. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper. Send a personal note of approval or call Doug Racine and Michael Obuchowski. Get a group of your friends to sign a petition of support and send it to your local Representatives and Senators. Sign the Marriage Resolution available online or the Vermont Voices for Equality resolution (available through your regional chapter of VFMTF). Encourage others to show their support by writing letters. Show the people in Hawaii and Ohio that we don't need them to tell us how to think! Show the people of Vermont that they can expect support if they have the courage to endorse our right to marry!

Also, knowing the amount of money that our opposition appears to have at their disposal, make another donation to the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force's education/information campaign. ▼

## Letters

### Time for Policy Change

Editor:

Thank you for publishing the information regarding the bill in the Legislature to define who can marry whom. I found out my insurance agent was one of the sponsors of the bill, so this morning I cancelled my policy with him.

Scott Brimblecombe  
Barre

### The Fundies Are Coming! The Fundies Are Coming!

Editor:

Vermonters, Beware! By now, every one of us has received in the mail a flyer from some unknown "Citizens for Community Values" organization in Cincinnati, Ohio, purporting to be an "open letter from the citizens of Hawaii to the citizens of Vermont," and claiming that the sky is going to fall in if Vermont allows same sex couples to marry.

The local Vermont group that is opposed to gay marriage is tiny, and couldn't possibly have the money to send out such an expensive mailing. But the national religious political extremist groups, such as the Christian Coalition and the Family Values Coalition and the Family Research Council, have tons of

money. They also know that Vermonters are repulsed by their hateful messages and indeed, by their very names, so don't be surprised if it turns out to be one of these conservative national organizations working behind the scenes here, using scare tactics to convince Vermonters that society as we know it will disintegrate if gay Vermonters are finally allowed the freedom to marry.

I hope this flyer outraged all of us. And I hope it galvanizes each of us to wake up, and realize that our borders are at risk if we don't start speaking out, and working against such hateful fear mongering. NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO BE COMPLACENT! We're very lucky here in Vermont; we have a gay rights law, and a strong hate crimes law, and a second parent adoption law. But all this may be at risk if the religious political extremists succeed in convincing our straight neighbors and friends that we have some nefarious agenda to take over the society.

Please, please, please, join the volunteers of the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force ([www.freetomarry.org](http://www.freetomarry.org)). Sign onto the Marriage Resolution. Speak to your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends, and your family about this issue. And send money to the Task Force; it is a completely Vermont-based grass roots organization that desperately needs your help and your support. Now is the time to get involved!

Nancy Yannett  
Monkton

## Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force meetings

Ten regional meetings are planned for May:

**BENNINGTON:** May meeting to be announced.

FMI: Sandi Cote, (802) 362-2959 or [whitacre@vermontel.net](mailto:whitacre@vermontel.net)

**BURLINGTON:** May 18, 6pm

Langrock, Sperry & Wool law offices, 275 College Street

**DERBY:** May 12, 7pm

First Universalist Parish, Main Street

**JOHNSON/MORRISVILLE AREA:** to be announced.

FMI: Chris Tebbetts, (802) 864-9337 or [ctinvt@aol.com](mailto:ctinvt@aol.com)

Burt Thompson, pager (802) 741-7731 or [thompsoa@badger.jsc.vsc.edu](mailto:thompsoa@badger.jsc.vsc.edu)

**MIDDLEBURY:** May 26, 6pm

Langrock, Sperry & Wool law offices, 111 S. Pleasant Street

**RUTLAND/WASHINGTON CO AREA:** to be announced.

FMI: Sandi Cote, (802) 362-2959 or [whitacre@vermontel.net](mailto:whitacre@vermontel.net)

**ST. ALBANS:** May 10, 6pm Jeff's Maine Seafood, Main St.

**ST. JOHNSBURY:** May 15, 1:30pm

St. Johnsbury Universalist Church, corner of Eastern and Cherry Streets

**WHITE RIVER JUNCTION:** to be announced

FMI: Sandi Cote, (802) 362-2959 or [whitacre@vermontel.net](mailto:whitacre@vermontel.net)

**WINDHAM CO AREA:** to be announced

FMI: Sandi Cote, (802) 362-2959 or [whitacre@vermontel.net](mailto:whitacre@vermontel.net)

Now more than ever, the organization urges GLBTA Vermonters to get involved

