

To the Editor:

One of your readers asserts that I believe that “when same-sex marriage is legalized, conservative people of faith will lose religious rights.” (David E. Smith, Letter to the Editor). I have never made such an outlandish statement.

To the contrary, I have pointed out that some religious and political groups have made the deliberate and inexcusable effort to portray the legalization of civil marriage for gay couples as threatening to the religious rights of others. Indeed, in a recent article, *The Selling of Proposition 8*, I carefully described and refuted the deliberate mistruths that have been strewn in this area by some religious groups.

What I have said, and what I continue to believe, is that positive changes in the moral values of our country – such as moral values that honor the love between two people, regardless of their gender – will inherently and necessarily pose a challenge to those who believe, for religious or other reasons, that such love is sinful. This is a simple, basic reality of any shift in a society’s moral values.

This tectonic shift in moral values means that people who were able to ignore gay people in the past can no longer do so. They are being called upon to provide services to gay people – everything from medical services to photography services. These demands for simple recognition and service will continue, regardless of whether gay couples also gain access to civil marriage.

The challenge for us as a society is to ensure the full integration of gay people into society, while acknowledging the liberty of those who believe homosexuality is sinful. I believe we can achieve those dual goals in a fair and respectful manner. But not if people continue to toss around inaccurate statements of the kind made by your reader.

Best wishes,

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