

Sunday, April 3, 2005

A sane voice on gay marriage.

Jane Galt at Asymmetrical information has a new post about gay marriage.

Go read it. All of it. Seriously. I for one am committing it to memory. This is an issue to which I've been struggling to come up with an answer. Parties on both sides make good points. And while I'm inclined to say to many of the most avid partisans on both sides that they're radically mischaracterizing their opposition, so far I haven't been able to honestly say to either side that I think they're entirely wrong about the issue.

In an ideal world, of course, we'd just get government completely out of the marriage business and let pluralism reign. But we don't live in an ideal world, and there's no clear path by which we could get from our present world to that ideal one without travelling through what seems to be altogether unpleasant dystopian territory on the way.

That being the case, we're compelled to either give government sanction to a radical redefinition of the meaning of an ancient and enduring custom...or else explicitly refuse to do so. Our prior choices prevent us from passing the buck to a level of pluralism our society doesn't currently have. And as the time now appears to be ripe, we will all shortly find ourselves having to either recognize and accept a profound and widely unpopular change in an institution that means a lot to many of us, or else tell a substantial fraction of our population that their choices are considered inferior...and American society has displayed a remarkable reluctance to the latter path in recent decades.

Andrew Sullivan is right...to the extent that committed, monogamous marriages are good for heterosexuals, they'd be good for homosexuals too. And we heterosexuals have frankly done a hell of a lot more damage to the presumptions of commitment and monogamy in marriage than the admission of homosexuals to the institution could ever be expected to do. Marriage is in dire trouble in this society, and it's not homosexuals who are to blame for that.

But the basic fact remains that anyone who doesn't understand why our current marriage customs are in place has absolutely no business whatsoever trying to eliminate them.

Posted by Matt at 12:02

"we'd just get government completely out of the marriage business and let pluralism reign"

in a idealistic country that - claims to have separation of church and state - we could at least get the churches out of the business of doing the state's work -- certifying the "civil marriage" part.
kelli on Apr 9 2005, 10:14