

Since the right to equal marriage was so recently won and lost, I question the sensitivity of proclaiming this week National Marriage Week in Fresno. Since, at the moment, this is a heterosexual privilege, it does seem to be rubbing salt in the wounds of the citizens who are not afforded this right, who only very recently lost it. And yet, I heard no mention of this loss in the proclamation.

In proclaiming this week now, on the heels of this loss, whether you mean it to or not, is sending a message. It is saying that marriage is important. Marriage is special, meaningful; it is worth saving, protecting and honoring. I agree. It is all these things. But, the last thing you are saying, that thing you may not mean is; *some are worthy of it and some are not*. Because, when you *know* that certain citizens are not allowed this privilege and then you hold it up as this wonderful thing, *without mentioning them*, you are saying that they *do not matter*.

I would like to point out to you that these citizens that are feeling this slight; they are not all adults. There are LGBT youth all over this city, this state, this country, who are being taught that they do not matter. That their rights are up for majority vote. There are children who, aware of their minority status, are going to hear about National Marriage Week and wonder why it doesn't include them. Why they are not even mentioned.

I am not against National Marriage Week on its own merit. But, I feel it is a painful time, Valentine's Week, for people who had hoped and dreamed to get married this week. I feel this situation can be salvaged a bit, by recognizing those who want this institution of marriage, but are denied it. So, I am asking you to come out yourselves, to come out for equality. Make a stand for what is right and moral. Proclaim this National Marriage Week, but proclaim it for ALL marriages, gay and straight. And about this, you need to be specific, since this right was specifically taken away. Proclaim it for the straight couple, who only needed to apply for a license. Proclaim it for the gay couples, waiting to hear if their marriage will be dissolved. Proclaim it for all the couples who wish to marry and can't. But, mostly, proclaim it for that child, who is waiting to see if he or she really matters.