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Official press release of LLEGÓ, The National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization
Comunicado de prensa oficial de LLEGÓ, La Organización Nacional de Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales y Transgéneros Latinas/os

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Congressional Opposition to Discriminatory Constitutional Amendment Growing Stronger

Twelve Hispanic Members of Congress Sign Letter to President Expressing
Opposition to Federal Marriage Amendment

Washington, D.C., June 24, 2004 – Hispanic Congressional opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage in the United States as a union between a man and a woman continues to grow as twelve Hispanic members of Congress sign a letter to President Bush expressing their strong opposition to H.J.Res 56/S.J. Res 26, the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA), and “any other proposed amendments which attempt to achieve the same discriminatory objective.” The letter also urges the President to reconsider his support of the discriminatory FMA.

The Members of Congress that have included their name on the sign-on letter thus far include: Reps. Charlie A. Gonzalez of Texas, Xavier Becerra of California, Lucille Roybal-Allard of California, Nydia M. Velázquez of New York, Grace Napolitano of California, Linda Sanchez of California, Loretta Sanchez of California, Ed Pastor of Arizona, Luis Gutierrez of Illinois, Hilda Solis of California, Raul Grijalva of Arizona and José E. Serrano of New York.

“The Constitution and its subsequent amendments were designed to protect and expand individual liberties,” the statement reads. “H.J. Res. 56 runs counter to the appropriate role of the federal government, is extremely divisive and discriminatory in nature.”

“Throughout our history and under the guiding principle of equal protection, the Constitution has been used to protect and expand individual liberties,” said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez. “Establishing a federal standard defining marriage is unnecessary and restrictive to states, but more importantly, it would incorporate into the Constitution the restriction of rights for an entire class of people. If that was to happen, it would establish a constitutional precedent upon which to justify discrimination and exclusion of others.”

In an effort to build the broadest Latino opposition possible to the amendment, LLEGÓ--the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization – has urged several prominent Latinos, including members of Congress and representatives of leading national Latino organizations, to take a stand against the FMA.

Last month representatives from the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the League of United Latin American Citizens, and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) announced their opposition at a LLEGÓ organized press conference.

“The momentum to proactively stop discrimination is growing,” said Martín Ornelas-Quintero, LLEGÓ executive director. “Latinos from all walks of life -- from union members to high-ranking government officials -- are coming forward to put an end to this prejudiced measure that is clearly designed to divide the nation for political gain. I am very proud of the Latino community for standing prominently with LGBT Americans and not allowing us to be relegated to second class status.”

According to a Feb. 24, 2004, Field Poll, 57 percent of Latinos polled, all of whom were registered voters in California--the state with the largest Latino population--oppose a federal constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage.

LLEGÓ is part of a broad coalition of organizations committed to fighting discrimination in the Constitution.

LLEGÓ, the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization, is the only national organization devoted to representing Latino lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities and advocating on behalf of their needs on an array of issues ranging from health to civil rights and social justice. Through a growing national network of organizations and coalitions, LLEGÓ develops solutions to social, health and political disparities which exist due to discrimination based on ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and which affect the lives and well-being of Latino LGBT people and their families. For more information about LLEGÓ, call 202-408-5380 or visit www.llego.org.

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