

## NEW RECOGNITION OF SAME GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

### INSTEAD OF

### A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Instead of a Constitutional Amendment Defining Marriage, we need to develop a new way to recognize committed same gender relationships. Ever since human life began some persons of one gender have chosen to share a committed relationship with a person of the same gender. Examples can be found in literature from all cultures, and even in the Bible. There is nothing illegal or immoral, about two persons sharing a same gender relationship. Great contributions to human society have emerged from persons in same gender relationships.

This is the proposal: If two persons of the same gender decide that they want to enter into a Committed Union, their union should be recognized, celebrated, and officially certified for all the world to know. They can dwell together, own property together, share insurance together. Protocols can be developed effecting job related issues such as sick leave and unemployment insurance. Laws can be codified to protect each partner's rights and the well-being of any adopted children in case the union should end. Such couples would have the right to file a joint income tax return.

Many persons are now living in same gender Committed Unions. There is great concern among them that the issues described in the proposal above are not presently available to them. This is the reason for the initiative to have same gender unions considered another form of marriage. But to do so is a disservice to same gender couples. The Committed Union of same gender couples should be recognized for the unique relationship that it is. To make it a "sub-section" of marriage law is to confuse the issue, and takes away from declaring same gender Committed Union to be a meaningful form of human relationship, worthy of its own recognition.

Now is the time for Gov. Perdue and the Legislature to work together to bring forth the necessary laws to fully validate same gender committed unions. Such action will affirm the worth of many, many same gender couples in our State who have long suffered harsh criticism, discrimination and lack of recognition.

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