

Post-election euphoria

California gay marriage vote negates basic freedom, says **Erin Goldman**

The day after the election, I woke up invincible; Barack Obama was elected to serve as the president of the United States of America. The voting population looked past the color of the man's skin and voted for him based upon merit.

However, my restored faith in humanity was short-lived. "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place

where all things are possible," declared Obama on Nov. 4, "who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer."

He spoke too soon.

Proposition 8, the California state ballot



Voices

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proposition to amend the state Constitution to restrict the definition of marriage to a union between a man and a woman, was approved by nearly 52.5 percent of California's voters. It was just this past May that the California Supreme Court ruled that individuals of the same sex have the right to marry under the California Constitution. To President-elect Obama, I say that America is not a place where all things are possible. I say it's a place where things are possible only

when it's convenient.

For hundreds of years, marriage was nothing more than a goat-for-girl swap. Daughters were a means to earn a few extra bucks. The idea of love, let alone the choice of whom one wants to marry, is an extremely modern idea.

To this day, there are still various cultures that partake in arranged marriages.

Homophobia alone disgusts me. But to deny two individuals their right to declare their love and have their devotion to one another legally recognized is inhumane. Heterosexuals, myself included, take the institution of marriage for granted. Nearly 50 percent of marriages in the United States end in divorce. And the numbers only increase for each additional marriage.

We treat marriage like a night out at a Chinese super jumbo buffet — after just a bite of a pot sticker, we throw out our plates and pile on some shrimp fried rice.

Our nation was founded upon the freedoms of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If two people of the same sex want to share their lives, does not banning same-sex marriage prevent their pursuit of happiness, one of their fundamental rights as Americans? How could anyone possibly oppose two humans, gay or otherwise, falling in love and wanting to share their joy with the world?

According to protectmarriage.com, the Yes on Prop 8 campaign Web site, a vote against

Proposition 8 may "result in public schools teaching our kids that gay marriage is OK. That is an issue for parents to discuss with their children according to their own values and beliefs."

While I neither believe nor understand religious beliefs that oppose homosexuality, I respect those who do. First Baptist Church in Dallas has a right to teach its members a biblical perspective on the issue.

However, homosexuality itself is not learned. The definition of marriage taught to a child in school does not negate homosexuality's existence. By shielding a child from or chastising a child about the gay lifestyle, we are not changing those around us. In actuality, we are creating just another generation of bigotry that our country has fought so long to overcome.

We are tarnishing the progress and significance of Barack Obama's election. Until there are truly equal rights for every citizen, no matter their age, race, gender or sexual orientation, our country will not be the land of freedom, hope and equality it was intended to be.



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