



CITY OF ITHACA
108 East Green Street Ithaca, New York 14850

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • CAROLYN K. PETERSON
Telephone: 607/274-6501 Fax: 607/274-6526

In the past several days a number of people have contacted my office asking me to state my position on same sex marriage. Let me be very clear that I view marriage as a civil right, one that should be available to all committed couples here in the City of Ithaca, the State of New York and in the United States.

I am in strong support of all of Ithaca's families and will actively support all legal means to make marriage available to same sex couples. Same sex couples deserve the equal protection of the law, the same as any other couple. They deserve to be able to bring their families out of the status of second class citizenship and into the full array of rights and responsibilities that are available to married couples. I believe that by supporting families, all families, we stabilize and strengthen our community.

The New York State Health Department does not currently allow city clerks to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples. Accordingly, any same sex couples who apply for a marriage license here in Ithaca will have their



application accepted and the City will forward each application to the State Department of Health for individual determinations. It is our belief that such action will best secure each couples' legal position should they wish to challenge Albany's decision.

The City of Ithaca will, in accordance with New York law and the U.S. Constitution, fully recognize all same sex marriages that were validly performed elsewhere. All people in Ithaca who are parties to such same sex marriages and their families will be accorded all of the rights and be subject to all of the legal obligations as those who have been parties to traditional marriages.

Additionally, I call on all sectors of the Ithaca community, particularly employers, business people and those in the educational sector to examine current policies and practices and to identify changes which could be instituted to provide equal support for all families with whom they interact, whether it's an employee/employer relationship or a client relationship.

I am proud to say that today Ithaca stands in solidarity with members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community as the struggle for legal

recognition of same sex marriage continues. I pledge as your Mayor to do all that I can to support the effort for full civil and human rights for your families and all families in our community and to work with the Ithaca Common Council to achieve these goals.