



# AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation  
of Labor and  
Congress of Industrial  
Organizations**

815 Black Lives Matter  
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November 16, 2022

Dear Senator:

The AFL-CIO urges you to vote in support of HR 8404, the Respect for Marriage Act. This legislation is essential to securing marriage equality for same-gender couples, as well as the marriages of individuals of different races, ethnicities or national origin.

HR 8404 would enshrine into law the diversity and inclusivity of the United States. Marriages, whether same-gender or interracial, or of people of differing ethnicities and nationalities, would be protected under federal law, and states would be required to recognize them. The concurrence of Justice Clarence Thomas in the *Dobbs* decision that appears to call into question U.S. Supreme Court precedents protecting marriage equality rightfully alarmed many. We urge the Senate to clarify and affirm that discrimination against same-gender and interracial marriages is unlawful.

The economic benefits that flow from a legally recognized marriage are substantial and should be consistent. Spouses often depend on each other for access to employment-based benefits, such as healthcare and Social Security. One's marital status also may determine the ability to remain and work lawfully in the United States. Working people depend on these economic benefits and have a reasonable expectation that their spouse can depend on them also.

By striking the Defense of Marriage Act, a law that defines marriage as between a man and a woman and allows states to refuse recognition of same-gender marriages validated in other states, the Respect for Marriage Act ensures that people who enter into same-gender marriages and marriages of different races, ethnicities and national origin have the certainty of equal treatment under the law and the dignity afforded other married couples regardless of where they live. We urge you to support the Respect for Marriage Act.

Sincerely,

William Samuel  
Director, Government Affairs