

Marriage equality: time for action

I'm sorry if I sound angry. It's because I am.

When human rights are at stake, there should be no room for debate. There should be only one guiding force fighting against an infringement on any person or people's rights.



BY JOSH BARKER
STAFF WRITER

One of the oldest, most vital and innate aspects of being human is the ability to love another person. Love is not simply an emotion and does not exist without expression and action. In our society, this expression and action often takes the form of marriage.

In most states, it is currently illegal for same-sex couples to express their love through marriage. This is a human rights issue, not a religious or political one, and it should be treated as such.

Recently the Supreme Court has heard arguments on Proposition 8 and The Defense of Marriage Act. Proposition 8 was passed in 2008, ending same-sex marriage in the state of California. The Defense of Marriage Act was enacted in 1996, allowing federal marriage benefits and inter-state recognition to only opposite-sex couples.

Although there will be no official ruling for some time, the consensus is that the Supreme Court will rule in favor of same-sex marriage, abolishing the Defense of Marriage Act but falling short of abolishing Proposition 8 or moving quickly towards a nationwide ruling on same-sex marriage.

This would keep the power with the state, marriage equality

spreading gradually across the country over the course of the next couple of decades. Eventually, even the most ardently red states will follow suit — although unfortunately the key word here is “eventually.”

And it does seem that many who have adamantly opposed same-sex marriage in the past are having a change of heart.

“You can believe that homosexuality is a sin and still believe that same-sex marriage can be legal,” said Timothy Keller, pastor of the conservative Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, to the Los Angeles Times.

Even Rush Limbaugh, who had previously compared homosexuality to pedophilia, begrudgingly said on his radio show that “gay marriage will soon be legal nationwide,” calling it an “inevitability.”

While this is all a very good start, it is not good enough. When there are human rights at stake, action must be taken and banal conversation must be avoided. We must remember that it is people who are at stake.

Denying a person their innate human rights damages that person in many different ways. Refusing the human rights of others can cause a tremendous amount of long lasting psychological damage.

Now is the only time to fix any human rights issue, and same-sex marriage is no different. There is more damage being done every minute that is wasted in argument rather than action. It is people that we love, and the very concept of love itself, that is being hurt by how slowly the movement towards marriage equality is moving.

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Harvard email privacy lesson: read before you select “I agree”

Harvard once again finds itself once again in the midst of a scandal. Last fall, it was rampant cheating in one class. Now, seemingly unwarranted email searches.



BY JOSH BALLARD
STAFF WRITER

Harvard officials authorized the email searches of 16 resident deans involved in the cheating investigation. The purpose of the searches was to discern whether these resident deans had released confidential information about the scandal, alerting

media outlets. The resident deans were never notified that their emails were to be searched.

Note that I do not say “searched without consent,” but I'll get to that in a second.

These resident deans didn't need to be informed of the searches because they were considered by the administration to be staff, not faculty. Faculty would have been informed. It's really more of a semantics issue than anything else. Sure, they've been lamenting the breach of trust and general creepiness of it, but in terms of how the administration worked it out, they did nothing wrong.

The resident deans were working with confidential information and, as such, had to follow the rules.

“These policies apply to everyone

at Harvard who works with Harvard confidential information,” states the Harvard Enterprise Information Security Policy, last updated on July 27 of last year. “Some employees dealing with high risk information are required to agree to confidentiality agreements by regulation or contractual agreement.”

So back to the point of consent. Computer technologies are becoming very prolific and with that spread, comes numerous new issues in relation to privacy and consent.

If you haven't read a contract or say, a terms of service agreement, but you sign or click “agree,” all of your complaints are forfeit. It's like those people who post those long messages on Facebook stating that Facebook can't use their content, etc. It's already too late. You've already agreed to Facebook's terms and services by joining the site. Gripping retroactively doesn't change anything.

This email searching just highlights the need for people to be more aware of what they are agreeing to —

whether it's in regards to personal or professional email, social media sites or even online shopping.

Guilford has similar policies. Our current handbook states: “If Guilford has a reason to believe that its network is or has been used in violation of the legal rights of any other person or entity or of any college, city, county, state or federal law, regulation or policy, the college reserves the right to review, access or monitor any information, communication or data stored on or transmitted through the network in order to facilitate an investigation or secure evidence related to a violation.”

This means that if you haven't read the rest of the handbook, you could possibly be in violation without knowing it. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, but at least at Guilford you will be informed of searches.

So the moral of the story here is to be conscientious. After all, it's better to have read and understood your agreements, than to never have agreed at all — and then pay the price for it.

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This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

The Guilfordian supports divesting from Sabra Hummus

In January 2012, a developmentally disabled man was severely beaten by soldiers at a checkpoint in the West Bank. Later that evening, soldiers entered the boy's home and beat his mother and brother.

A few weeks later, soldiers detained two young boys after accusing them of throwing rocks. When the boys' parents showed up to pick up their sons, they were handed a list of five other boys' names and told to collect the children before their own sons would be released.

The soldiers responsible for these crimes are members of the Golani Brigade, an infantry unit of the Israeli Defense Force. The IDF receives monetary support from a company called the Strauss Group, which owns a company called Sabra Dipping.

You may recognize the brand name “Sabra” from the cups of hummus sold in the Grill or from the petitions that have been circulating among staff and students. Many individuals have expressed their support of Guilford divesting from Sabra due to the Strauss Group's financial entanglements with the Golani Brigade. Divesting from Sabra would mean that Guilford no longer works with Sabra Dipping, and that a different brand of hummus — or a homemade one — would be offered instead.

The Guilfordian's Editorial Board, along with Students Allied Against Privilege and Supremacy, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Sexual Assault Awareness Support and Advocacy, support divesting from Sabra.

Guilford has divested from companies in the past. In 2007, the college switched to Pepsi-Cola from Coca-Cola, detaching itself from a company known for human rights abuses in South America. Fueled by student initiatives and forums, Guilford also made the decision to divest from Nestle, which used to supply coffee to the Caf and Grill.

Divesting from Sabra gives us the opportunity to integrate our core values more deeply into our decision-making processes. As the call to action distributed by SAAPS says, divesting from Sabra is not meant to be a political or religious statement — rather, it is “a rejection of all human rights violations internationally, no matter their political surroundings.”

As a student organization, we seek to make Guilford an institution more in line with the principles to which it seeks to hold its staff, faculty and students. While there is much work to be done in deepening Guilford's commitment to its core values, divesting from Sabra is a step in the right direction.

To read more about this divestment initiative, visit: WWW.GUILCOSOJO.COM

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