

## Massachusetts Marriage Equality Timeline

- 1972:** Newly elected state Representative Barney Frank files MA Gay Civil Rights Bill
- 1980s:** Significant numbers of lesbians begin having children; Large numbers of gay men contract AIDS. Both highlight the lack of legal protections for same-sex couples and their children.
- 1985:** Gov. Michael Dukakis decides that gays and lesbians cannot be foster parents; in response the LGBT community organizes around the issue of LGBT family protections
- 1989:** After 17 years in the legislature, the MA Gay Civil Rights Bill-filed in 1972-passes
- 1990s:** In this decade, the MA legislature defeated domestic partnership proposals; some cities and towns, notably Boston and Cambridge passed domestic partnership ordinances further legitimizing same-sex relationships; by 2000 the state high court overturned all of the ordinances because they had not been approved by the legislature
- 1990:** An out-of-court settlement determines that gays and lesbians can be foster parents
- 1993:** State high court rules that the non-biological parent in a same-sex couple can adopt his or her partner's child
- 1996:** Pres. Bill Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman
- 2000:** Vermont legislature invents civil unions as a parallel to marriage for same-sex couples
- 2001:** Citizen petitions to define marriage in the state constitution as one man and one woman are initiated; GLAD asks seven Massachusetts couples to sue for the right to marry.
- 2003:** State high court rules in *Goodridge* case that according to the Massachusetts constitution, same-sex couples have the right to marry
- 2003-4:** MA legislature debates amending the constitution to prevent same-sex marriage; initially only 50 legislators support the *Goodridge* decision and full marriage equality.
- Winter 2004:** Rolling acts of civil disobedience in San Francisco, WA, NY, OR, NJ, and NM as political leaders allow same-sex marriages. All eventually are declared illegal.
- Spring 2004:** May 17 same-sex couples begin to marry; the Massachusetts reality TV show of what happens when gays marry begins to play out.
- 2006:** Deval Patrick, pledging to support same-sex marriage, is elected Massachusetts governor.
- 2007:** June 14 the Massachusetts legislature defeats an amendment to the constitution that would prohibit same-sex marriage. Equal marriage supporters in the 200 member legislature grow from 50 in 2004 to 151 in 2007. Nearly 10,000 same-sex couples have married in Massachusetts. The world has not ended!

Legislature 67% practicing Catholics