



NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS



making the case for equality



Equality California | eqca.org

**Making the first argument will be:  
STATEMENT FROM SHANNON MINTER, ESQ.  
Legal Director  
National Center for Lesbian Rights**

Proposition 8 jeopardizes not just the right of same-sex couples to marry, but the rights of all Californians to be treated as free and equal citizens of our state. Our Constitution is based on the principle that majorities must respect minority rights. But if a majority can change the Constitution to take away a fundamental right from one historically disadvantaged minority group, then it can selectively strip fundamental rights from any group. Our system of government will have changed from one that respects minority rights to one in which the power of the majority is all but unlimited.

Equal protection for all citizens is the hallmark of American democracy. If upheld, Prop. 8 would undermine that central, defining guarantee and the unprecedented freedom that it has enabled us to enjoy. That is what is at stake in this case. As legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, I am honored to be a part of such an incredible legal team, including Steve Bomse from Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, Lambda Legal, the ACLU, David Codell from the Law Office of David C. Codell, and attorneys from Munger Tolles & Olson LLP. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work alongside Dennis Herrera and Therese Stewart from the San Francisco City Attorney's office. Also standing with us in this challenge are the office of the California Attorney General and an unprecedented presence from labor unions, civil rights groups, religious organizations and countless other members of the community who signed on as amici in this case. They all understand the significance of this case, not just for the LGBT community, but for all citizens of California.

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**The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)** is a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education. [www.nclrights.org/overturn8](http://www.nclrights.org/overturn8)