



ACLU-TN Statement on *ACLU v. Darnell*

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NASHVILLE – The American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee (ACLU-TN) is disappointed by the ruling, which allows the discriminatory amendment, commonly called the “Marriage Protection Amendment,” to go forward without addressing the alleged unconstitutional actions of the General Assembly. The Tennessee Supreme Court dismissed the suit on the narrow legal issue of standing and did not address the underlying claim.

ACLU-TN Staff Attorney Melody Fowler-Green said, “We are disappointed that the Tennessee Supreme Court ignored the safeguards put in place by the framers of the Tennessee Constitution. The framers intended to ensure that the people of Tennessee are fully informed before they take the extraordinary step of amending the Constitution, especially in a case like this where important legal protections for thousands of loving Tennessee families are on the line.”

“ACLU-TN will continue to fight to ensure equal protection and respect under the law,” said Hedy Weinberg, Executive Director. “All Tennessee families need and deserve the ability to make medical decisions for loved ones, access to health insurance, and the ability to hold on to one’s home and livelihood at the death of a life partner. We are confident that the people of Tennessee will recognize this proposed amendment does harm to thousands of gay and lesbian couples and their children, and will vote the amendment down in November.”

ACLU filed *ACLU v Darnell* in April 21, 2005 challenging a proposed amendment to the Tennessee Constitution that would ban same-sex couples from being able to marry in the state. The lawsuit charged that the state failed to meet notification requirements as outlined in the State Constitution. The lawsuit was brought on behalf of ACLU members; the Tennessee Equality Project (TEP), a statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lobbying organization; State Representatives Larry Turner, Beverly Robison Marrero and Tommie Brown; as well as a number of private citizens.

Plaintiff Scott Hines will be available for further comment – please contact Eric Eagan at 212.519.7831