

# The Post and Courier

## Letters to the Editor

Saturday, April 18, 2009

### Marriage debate

William Murchison's invective against the legitimacy of same-sex marriage ("Gay 'marriage' a contradiction of simple logic," April 9) seems to rest on his belief that words (and society) are immutable. It's just not true. In fact, the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary has expanded "marriage" to include "the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage." This quiet linguistic revolution mirrors the opinion of a majority of Americans that gay citizens deserve the same rights as their straight friends and neighbors.

When most couples say their vows, I suspect they think about the commitment they are making to one another, and not, as Murchison argues, that marriage is "a compact reinforcing social survival and projection." By this reasoning, only those couples who are capable of naturally giving birth to children are worthy of the hundreds of legal protections that come with marriage.

The reality is that same-sex couples make commitments and form families just like straight couples. They shouldn't be denied the same legal protections, like being able to visit their loved ones in the hospital and make emergency medical decisions, that help families through difficult times.

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