

Background information in support of the WLCJ Resolution on LGBTQ+

If we are created in G-d's image, it's our responsibility to treat all humankind with fairness, compassion and respect. In this regard, we should look at the Preamble of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted just after WWII. It states that human dignity and equal rights are the cornerstones for "freedom, justice and peace in the world." Note the similarity here to Jewish core values of society as specified in *Pirkei Avot*.

As Jews, we are sensitive when one group of people has power over those who differ from the "accepted" norm. Yet, this power, along with hatred, is held by many individuals, groups and countries towards the LGBTQ+ and non-binary community, often with tragic results.

Major changes have been made, albeit slowly. For example, it took US supporters decades to legalize same-sex marriage, a basic right for any community, including LGBTQ+ and non-binary individuals. Finally, in 2015, when same-sex marriage had been legal in 36 states and the District of Columbia, the US Supreme Court ruled that state bans were unconstitutional (and thus gay marriage was legal in all fifty US states).

In contrast, by authorizing the Civil Marriage Act as early as 2005, Canada became the fourth nation to authorize same-sex marriage. And in Mexico, same-sex marriage was legalized (in Mexico City) in 2009, and became effective in 2010.

The freedom to marry whomever one chooses is just one of many liberties that everyone deserves. Activism is still necessary to obtain equality and justice for

the LGBTQ+ and non-binary community. It's time to address this, and to demand basic human rights for all of G-d's cherished creations.

If not now, when?

From Section One, Therefore, # 2:

Women's League Calls on Sisterhoods to **educate** its members to develop/promote:

- a. Inclusive physical site needs (i.e. restrooms).
- b. Inclusive language, which impacts gender and gender expression, in marketing materials, membership forms, etc. For example, Sisterhood materials should make it possible for an individual to be known by the identity, name and pronoun of one's choice.
- c. Educational Sisterhood programming to address these issues, such as a book talk about the novel, "This Is How It Always Is," by Laurie Frankel. There are many other examples.
- d. That the same civil rights and privileges granted to married heterosexual couples should be granted to all LGBTQ+ and non-binary married couples.
- e. An individual's ability to change gender on government-related documents.

From Section One, Therefore, # 5:

Equal rights include, but are not limited to:

- a. On-site facilities (i.e. restrooms).
- b. Schools.
- c. Healthcare.
- d. Employment.
- e. Foster care.
- f. Adoption services.