

# 'It's not like they're from outer space': Testimony on same-sex marriage in Maryland

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Yesterday, the Maryland state Senate [heard testimony](#) about a pending bill that would legalize same-sex marriage in the state. According to *Metro Weekly*, [150 people showed up to testify](#) over the six hour hearing. A sampling of opinions aired at yesterday's event, from "men and women still comprise the two great halves of humanity" to "it's not like they're from outer space":

**FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE:** 10-year-old Bena Williams, [in support of her parents](#): "It's not like they're from outer space."

**AGAINST SAME-SEX MARRIAGE:** "Marriage is about children and the good of society," said [Martha Schaerr](#), the Montgomery County School Board candidate who lobbied to teach children about [the dangers of anal sex](#). "To change it to adult love changes the definition of marriage."

**FOR:** [Maryland Black Family Alliance rep Darrell Carrington](#): "Discrimination is wrong no matter who the victim is."

**AGAINST:** "The reason that marriage is a virtually universal human social institution that reoccurs again and again in different cultures, and different religious backgrounds, is that humanity recognizes that we need a special institution to bring together a male and female to make and raise the next generation," National Organization for Marriage rep [Maggie Gallagher](#) said. "To get to gay marriage requires that we repudiate this as a public purpose of marriage . . . way that we can give our children the benefit of a mother and father in a single family is to first pledge to a permanent, faithful, sexually exclusive union of man and woman."

**FOR:** "With the imminent repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, we will now be able to serve openly," [Army veteran Gina Foringer](#) testified. "It is time for this state to provide the same freedoms that the military community is now seeking to provide us. We fight for freedom. Let us have it."

**AGAINST:** Austin Nimocks, [senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund](#): "The legislation before you is inconsistent with the purposes of Maryland's marriage laws," the Scottsdale, Ariz.-based attorney testified. "Men and women still comprise the two great halves of humanity."

**FOR:** "That term [partner] cheapens our relationship," Maryland state Sen. Richard Madaleno [testified of his civil union](#). "It makes it sound like we are simply in business together . . . It is a badge of dishonor I must wear every day whenever I introduce Mark to anyone or even talk about him to someone who does not know us, because my state refuses to grant us civil marriage. I would never ask any of you to relegate your wives or husbands to being only your 'partners.'"

**AGAINST:** Republican state Sen. Nancy Jacobs, "an opponent of same-sex marriage," [questioned](#) whether the legislation "would permit businesses—such as bakers of wedding cakes—to refuse to cater same-sex weddings if such unions deeply offend their religious beliefs."

**FOR:** Democratic state Sen. Jamie Raskin [testified that](#) "shops in his Takoma Park district are now losing potential revenue as gay couples in the city spend their wedding dollars in neighboring Washington, D.C., where same-sex marriages are legally performed."

**AGAINST:** Derek McCoy, [president of the Association of Maryland Families](#): "Your concerns should not be on pandering to the political mood of the day . . . Marriage is between a man and a woman."

**FOR:** Maya Deane-Polyak, 14, the [daughter of two moms](#): "My moms do everything for me," Deane-Polyak said. "They create such a normal, extraordinary life for me."

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