

SOB 2011-04

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT

WHEREAS: the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) which passed in September, 1996, holds that 1) no state, or political sub-division within the United States, may be required to recognize as a marriage a same-sex relationship considered a legal marriage in another state or political sub-division, and that, 2) the federal government shall not recognize same-sex relationships as marriage, whether they are considered legal marriages in certain states or not, and

WHEREAS: on February 23, 2011, US Attorney General Eric Holder announced that the US Justice Department will no longer defend the second provision (above) of The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in cases challenging its constitutionality, and

WHEREAS: five states – Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont – as well as the District of Columbia, currently issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and

WHEREAS: in March, in 2011 nation-wide polling, 51% of voters opposed DOMA, while only 34% supported it, and

WHEREAS: being denied legal marriage status means same-sex couples are denied numerous protections granted to married straight couples such as hospital visitation, Social Security benefits, immigration, health insurance, estate taxes, family leave, nursing homes, home protection and pensions, and,

WHEREAS: the U.S. General Accounting Office reported in 2004 that there are 1,138 federal statutory provisions classified to the United States Code in which benefits, rights, and privileges are contingent on marital status or in which marital status is a factor, and

WHEREAS: the Respect for Marriage Act is a piece of federal legislation that would repeal DOMA and end federal discrimination against legally married same-sex couples, and

WHEREAS: AFT Washington has members who are in same-sex partnerships and, further, our members work with students who are in or from families composed of same-sex partnerships, and

WHEREAS: AFT Washington is a labor union committed to fighting for justice, equality and inclusion, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that AFT Washington supports the Respect for Marriage Act, and be it further

RESOLVED: that AFT Washington will communicate this support in the form of letters to our congressional delegation urging their sponsorship of the Respect for Marriage Act, or thanking them if they have already sponsored the Act.

Originally submitted by the Human Rights Committee and passed at the AFT Washington Executive Board meeting on July 29, 2011.