

I have seen several friends post the article [“How Does Gay Marriage Hurt Us? Here’s How.”](#) and found it terribly lacking. Here are the key points it makes and some of my thoughts on these.

“How does our marriage hurt you?” they ask. Well, I can think of one significant way it will hurt us: It will destroy religious freedom and free speech rights. The handwriting is on the wall in Canada, which legalized same-sex “marriage” in 2005, [...] since then, as Michael Coren notes in National Review Online, “there have been between 200 and 300 proceedings ... against critics and opponents of same-sex marriage.” Of course he means legal proceedings.

For instance, in Saskatchewan, a homosexual man called a state marriage commissioner, wanting to “marry” his partner. The commissioner, an evangelical Christian, declined to conduct the ceremony for religious reasons. He simply referred the man to another commissioner.

But that was not enough for the gay couple. Even though they got their ceremony, they wanted to punish the Christian who had declined to conduct it. The case ended up in the courts. And the result? Those with religious objections to conducting such ceremonies now face the loss of their jobs.

So of these 200 to 300 proceedings that the author identified, the case the author decides to highlight was that of an individual who was employed by the government, and whose job it was to marry people who requested to be married. Per [this article](#), the couple were married the same day by a different commissioner.

There was a tribunal held to review the case, and the outcome was that the state marriage commissioner **didn’t do his job as a public servant**, “The Commission stands by its position that to allow public officials to insert their personal morality when determining who should and who should not receive the benefit of law undermines human rights in Saskatchewan beyond the issue of same-sex marriages.” In other words, we can’t allow public servants to enforce the law as they see fit — it needs to be enforced consistently. I fail to understand how this case supports the conclusion that gay marriage “will destroy religious freedom and free speech rights.”

Canadian churches are also under attack. Coren writes that when Fred Henry, the Roman Catholic bishop of Calgary, Alberta, sent a letter to churches explaining traditional Catholic teaching on marriage, he was “charged with a human-rights violation” and “threatened with litigation.”

Churches with theological objections to performing same-sex “wedding” ceremonies are being threatened with the loss of their tax-free status. In British Columbia, the Knights of Columbus agreed to rent its building for a wedding reception before finding out that the couple was lesbian. When they did find out, they apologized to the women and agreed to both find an alternative venue and pay the costs for printing new invitations. But that wasn’t good enough. The women prosecuted, and the Human Rights Commission ordered the Knights of Columbus to pay a fine.

Again, let’s look at the outcome of this case. From [wikipedia](#) we find out that the conclusion wasn’t any destruction of religious freedom: “The tribunal found that the local council **did not have to rent the hall if in so doing they would violate their religious beliefs.**” The fine from the Human Rights Commission was because they found the Knights “could have directed the complainants to other halls and assisted them in finding another place to hold their event.” Essentially, the fine was because they didn’t treat the couple humanely. No religious freedom was reduced, only the expectation to be half-way respectful to each other was reenforced.

If you think this couldn’t happen here, think again. This year [2012] we’ve seen ObamaCare at-

tack the autonomy of Catholic churches by attempting to force them, in violation of Catholic teaching, to pay for contraceptives and abortifacients for church employees. And just last week, a lesbian employee of a Catholic hospital in New York sued the hospital for denying her partner spousal health benefits.

Both of these cases, PPACA “forcing” Catholics to buy contraceptives and the New York case, *Roe v. Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield*, the courts found in favor of the religious entity. Catholic churches now have an **accommodation** regarding birth control and self-insured health plans such as the New York hospital are **not required** to offer coverage to same-sex spouses. As should have been expected, religious freedoms have been strengthened by these lawsuits. There will always be someone willing to sue, and anyone can sue anyone fairly cheaply, but it is the outcome that matters, especially when you are claiming serious harm as is this author.

The author’s conclusion:

This is what we need to tell our neighbors when they ask us, “How does gay ‘marriage’ hurt us?” It means that those hostile to our beliefs will attempt to bend us to their will to force us to not only accept gay “marriage,” but to condone it as well.

It is pretty silly to think that those that support marriage equality wouldn’t *prefer* that people condone it. “Condone” means “accept and allow (behavior that is considered morally wrong or offensive) to continue.” That isn’t a very high bar — essentially it is some degree of tolerance.

This article is essentially fear mongering — church leaders have said bad things are going to happen, so we believe it when people claim as much. Instead, we should take into account what has happened in other countries as a result of marriage equality becoming law. Check out the funny and more accurate summary of the impacts in these other countries from BuzzFeed: **[Disasters You Can Expect Now That Marriage Equality Is Here](#)**. I hope that we can all move toward more tolerance of one another. Contrary to the opinion of some, there are much more important issues than this that we should be focusing on.