

**Rep. Henry A. Waxman Statement in Opposition to the so-called “Marriage
Protection Amendment”**

July 25, 2006

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong opposition to House Joint Resolution 88, which would amend our Constitution to deny basic rights to gays and lesbians. I would like to express my disappointment in the Republican leadership for once again bringing this divisive and discriminatory amendment before Congress.

Our Constitution has guided our nation for over 200 years. During that time, it has been amended to guarantee religious liberty, equal protection, and the right to vote. Not once has it been amended to take away rights from a specific group of people. Yet that is what this legislation would do.

Of course, this constitutional amendment will not be adopted; it failed to garner even a simple majority only weeks ago in the Senate. We are wasting our time on this because Republican pollsters have concluded that targeting gays and lesbians is a winning election strategy.

Mr. Speaker, our fellow citizens deserve better. Same-sex couples are trying to raise families, pay the bills, get health care for their partners, and put their kids through college. Instead of working to help them, we are debating whether to permanently deny

them over 1,000 rights and benefits given to married heterosexual couples. We should be striving for fairness and equality, not singling them out for discrimination.

Americans are sick and tired of political gamesmanship. They want a Congress that will address the real challenges our nation faces: health care, energy security, education, economic opportunity. The Republican leadership has once again let down the American people, and I urge my colleagues to reject this effort to distract and divide.