

## **Equal Marriage Rights Resolution for all in New York State**

WHEREAS, the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club (CROC) has always been in the forefront as an advocate for equal treatment and civil rights for all people; and

WHEREAS, CROC is committed to equality not only for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, but also for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples and families; and

WHEREAS, same sex couples in committed relationships do not presently have the same property, inheritance, immigration, and other legal protections, rights and responsibilities that heterosexual couples acquire when they marry; and

WHEREAS, states like Vermont, California and Hawaii, and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia have passed comprehensive measures giving rights and responsibilities to same sex couples and families up to and including civil marriage; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States recently affirmed that love, family and intimacy have deep constitutional protection and that gay people, like all Americans, are entitled to make life-defining choices in these vital personal spheres for themselves; and

WHEREAS, the state of New York has legally recognized the basic equality of lesbian and gay people through the recent passage of the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act, long championed by CROC; and

WHEREAS, lesbian and gay couples and families are in need of the same legal protections as other families, in areas including, but not limited to: medical decision making authority, hospital visitation rights, legal authority to decide disposition of a partner's bodily remains, access to family court, custody and adoption, employment benefits, housing, pension and death benefits, inheritance, property rights, healthcare, immigration, and provision of social services and credit; and

WHEREAS, leading legal authorities, including the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, have concluded that there is no good reason to perpetuate the discriminatory exclusion of same-sex couples from civil marriage;

WHEREAS, CROC recognizes the distinction between civil and religious marriage, and supports religious freedom which permits and will continue to permit every church, synagogue, mosque and other religious institutions to decide for itself whether or not to celebrate or perform any religious marriage;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that CROC reasserts its firm support for equal treatment under the law of same-sex couples and families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, CRDC specifically supports the right of lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender couples to marry in New York State.