

Statement of BASF President Priya Sanger on the Defense of Marriage Act

February 24, 2011

The Obama Administration took a historic step yesterday toward ending federal discrimination against same-sex couples by announcing that the United States Department of Justice would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in court. The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) has supported the struggle for marriage equality for some time, both in court through its amicus participation and throughout the California legal community via the work of BASF's delegation to the Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations, where BASF recently successfully fought for a resolution condemning Proposition 8 as an attack on the civil rights of same-sex couples. BASF applauds the Obama Administration's decision to finally recognize DOMA for what it is – an unconstitutional attack on our neighbors, friends, relatives and co-workers and the dignity of their committed relationships.

The LGBT Subcommittee of BASF's Equality Committee, chaired in 2011 by Shay Aaron Gilmore of Carroll, Burdick & McDonough LLP and by Sonia Banerji, in-house counsel in San Francisco, has pushed over the years to advance the rights of LGBT people and to increase awareness of this civil rights struggle within the San Francisco legal community and beyond. The LGBT Subcommittee's dedicated work on marriage equality throughout the years has included the formation of BASF's Marriage Fairness Task Force to galvanize the legal community against Proposition 8 as well as presentations to the San Francisco legal community on issues related to the struggle for marriage equality, including last year's well-attended panel discussion addressing the federal challenge to Proposition 8 currently pending before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

BASF thanks the entire LGBT Subcommittee for its leadership on the struggle for marriage equality and recognizes the subcommittee's past and present members for their contributions, large and small, to yesterday's groundbreaking advancement of LGBT civil rights.

Priya Sanger
2011 BASF President

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The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization of over 8,000 attorneys, law students and legal professionals in the Bay Area. Founded in 1872, BASF is one of the largest and most dynamic metropolitan bar associations in the U.S., with a long and distinguished record of community action, public service and service to the legal profession.