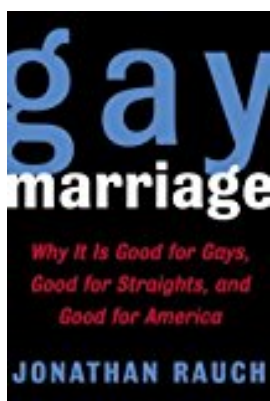


[PDF] Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good For Gays, Good For Straights, And Good For America

Jonathan Rauch - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good

Author: Jonathan Rauch

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Description:

Marriage, when it's right (and usually when it's wrong), is a subject that stirs strong feelings. Gay marriage inspires its own set of passions, with opponents decrying it as a step that will undermine the very fabric of society while supporters posit it as an inevitable next stage in step-by-step

acceptance of homosexuality by mainstream America. Appearing as the issue heats up following President George W. Bush's call for a constitutional amendment that would block the gathering tide of gay nuptials, this polemic by *Atlantic Monthly/National Journal* writer Jonathan Rauch deftly walks a fine line, both personalizing the subject (Rauch is a gay man with a longtime lover and a lifelong wistful attitude about marriage) and addressing it with an intellectual poise informed by historical and philosophical perspectives. Rauch actually supports the steady-as-she-goes, state-by-state advancement of gay marriage, believing that "same sex marriage will work best when people accept and understand it, whereas a sudden national enactment, where it suddenly to happen, might spark a culture war on the order of the abortion battle." *Might?* It says a lot about Rauch's temperance that he doesn't forecast an inevitably fractious future for the nation while it sorts through the implications of gay weddings. There are more impassioned perspectives on the issue, but Rauch's positive approach advances the issue with a welcome coolheadedness that actually suits the controversy. This is, after all, a fight over the right of traditional outsiders to engage in an inherently conservative institution. --*Steven Stolder*

From Publishers Weekly In this highly readable but rarely innovative polemic, *Atlantic Monthly* correspondent and *National Journal* columnist Rauch argues that the gradual legalization of gay marriage can only strengthen the institution it wishes to expand. He argues that pervasive separate-but-equal strategies would weaken the institution of marriage more than marriage for all, because of the inevitable appeal of "marriage-lite" to heterosexual couples who might otherwise marry. (A recent *New York Times* article documents precisely that phenomenon in France.) Yet for Rauch, currently a writer-in-residence at the Brookings Institution, the most compelling argument for gay marriage is moral, and only tangentially related to the principle of granting citizens equal rights under the law. Echoing recent arguments by Andrew Sullivan and David Brooks, Rauch defends gay marriage as the only social reform that can save gays from what he characterizes as the adolescent and unfulfilling lifestyle that love and sex outside of marriage has forced upon same-sex couples for centuries. Allowing gays to participate in "the great civilizing institution" would inevitably ennoble gay relationships; providing access to marriage would give them access to "a better kind of love." Such sallies will leave some readers wondering whether "better," for Rauch, really means "straight"; "If I could have designed myself in the womb," writes Rauch (who is openly gay) elsewhere, "I would have chosen to be heterosexual." Reporting such fantasies may win Rauch points for honesty, but they don't do much for his argument, other than to allow straights who support equal rights but are uneasy with homosexuality itself to identify with his position more easily. Such mixed signals make for a decidedly mixed bag.

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