



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE**

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*Chairman, Board of Directors*

January 25, 2010

Reverend Anthony Evans  
President  
National Black Church Initiative  
P.O. Box 65177  
Washington, D.C. 20035

Dear Reverend Evans;

Thank you for taking so much time out of what we are sure is a very busy schedule to craft such a detailed letter dated December 17, 2009, which we received January 4, 2010, regarding the NAACP policy on "gay marriage". We both appreciate your taking so much time and detail to put your thoughts in writing and apologize for taking as much time as we did to respond to your inquiries and concerns in a thoughtful, responsive and respectful manner.

One issue we wish to address most definitively is the contention, raised in the letter, that the NAACP is attempting to determine "a theological question like 'gay marriage'." It is important to understand from the onset that nothing in the NAACP's policy positions should be construed to determine a theological assessment. Our policy positions are always restricted to national and state public policies and the law. As you so astutely pointed out in your letter, on the occasions that either of us have spoken out in support of allowing people of the same gender to marry, we have done so as a private individual, clearly stating, as you mentioned, that this position is not that of the NAACP. On this matter we firmly agree with your statement; the NAACP does not have an official position either opposing or supporting "gay marriage". You are also correct in recognizing that positions raised in direct support of "gay marriage" were, as stated, the personal positions of those speaking them.

To reiterate, the national NAACP has not taken an official position on the issue of "gay marriage", nor is there any such plan to at this time. As I am sure you know, the clearly stated mission of the NAACP is "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination." True to our mission, we are opposed to laws or constitutional amendments which in any way discriminate against a particular group, racial, ethnic, gender or otherwise. Our opposition to laws that result in certain sectors of American society being treated in a discriminatory manner than the majority has been, and continues to be, a driving force of our Association more than 100 years.

To our knowledge, never has the national NAACP nor any of our state conferences or local branches attempted to "determine a theological question". We have fought for, and continue to struggle in the name of equality and the ability of all Americans to pursue the constitutionally guaranteed rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Because the issue you are raising is a public policy issue for the NAACP, I have forwarded a copy of your letter and this response to Mr. Hilary O. Shelton, the director of the NAACP Washington Bureau and the Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy. If you have additional questions or concerns about our policy or positions, please feel free to reach out to Mr. Shelton at (202) 463-2940.

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,



Julian Bond  
Chairman  
NAACP National Board of Directors



Benjamin T. Jealous  
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cc:

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