

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

January 6, 2012

Dear Democratic Colleagues in the New Jersey Senate and Assembly:

We, the entire Democratic membership of the New Jersey Congressional delegation, urge you to support the marriage equality bill being introduced by the Democratic leadership in the state Senate and Assembly, along with many sponsors.

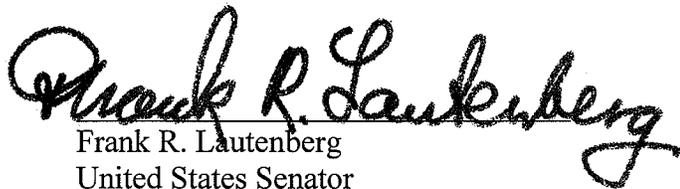
New Jersey has a proud history of civil rights leadership, and we must continue our role in pursuing fairness and equality. Other states with a combined population of more than 35 million people already have marriage equality – including our next door neighbor, New York.

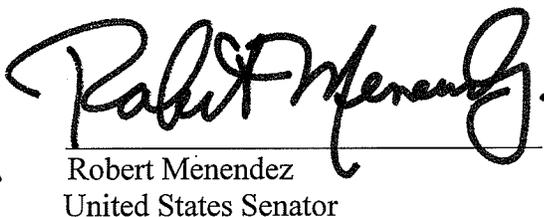
Although New Jersey has a civil union law, ample testimony before the New Jersey Senate Judiciary Committee two years ago demonstrated that the civil union law has not successfully provided equality to same-sex couples in New Jersey. Couples testified that hospitals still refuse visitation and medical-decision rights because they do not consider civil unions to be equal to marriage. Similarly, couples demonstrated that employers continue to refuse to grant equal benefits to civil union partners.

As more states recognize marriage equality, civil unions threaten to become an even less respected and understood alternative to marriage. The 2008 New Jersey Civil Union Review Commission concluded there was “overwhelming evidence that civil unions will not be recognized by the general public as the equivalent of marriage in New Jersey with the passage of time.”

It is important to note that New Jersey enacted the strongest possible civil union law in 2006. Therefore, it is not feasible to “fix” the law short of providing marriage equality. The time has come to end discrimination in marriage. The marriage equality bill in the New Jersey legislature needs your support.

Sincerely,

  
Frank R. Lautenberg  
United States Senator

  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

*Rush Holt*

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

*Robert E. Andrews*

Robert Andrews  
Member of Congress

*Albio Sires*

Albio Sires –  
Member of Congress

*Steven Rothman*

Steven Rothman  
Member of Congress

*Bill Pascrell Jr.*

Bill Pascrell  
Member of Congress

*Frank Pallone Jr.*

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

*Donald M. Payne*

Donald Payne  
Member of Congress