



MEDIA RELEASE
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**30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF LANDMARK MARRIAGE EQUALITY
DECISION BY HAWAII SUPREME COURT**

HONOLULU, HI – The ACLU of Hawai‘i and Hawai‘i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) will convene a public gathering to honor the important role the State of Hawai‘i played in the pursuit of marriage equality for members of the LGBTQ+ community. The event will take place on Monday, February 13, at 10 AM in the Hawai‘i State Capitol Auditorium.

2023 marks the 30th anniversary of *Baehr v. Lewin*, where the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court determined that denying a marriage license to a same-sex couple violated the equal protection guaranteed by the state Constitution. Less than two months ago President Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act into law, requiring the federal government and all states to recognize the validity of same-sex marriages. Advocates say the [1990 case played a key role in the fight for marriage equality](#) across the country.

Special guests for the anniversary event will include, Former Judge Daniel Foley (ret.), who litigated the case as an advocate for the ACLU of Hawai‘i and recently authored a Honolulu Civil Beat column, “[Reflections on the Respect for Marriage Act](#),” Genora Dancel, one of the plaintiffs in the case, Former Hawai‘i Supreme Court Justice Steven Levinson (ret.), who authored the *Baehr v. Lewin* decision, and Tom Ramsey, who will provide brief remarks about the road leading to Hawai‘i’s legalization of same-sex marriage in a special session of the State Legislature in 2013.

“I am proud of the historic role that our state played in the pursuit of marriage equality, and I am happy to honor the key role Dan Foley and the ACLU of Hawai‘i had in kickstarting a process that took far too long but ultimately bent toward justice,” said Hawai‘i State House Speaker Rep. Scott Saiki.

Along with current U.S. Rep. Ed Case, Speaker Saiki was one of a few votes against a 1998 measure that placed a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage on the ballot. “I remain committed to advancing the health and well-being of the LGBTQ+ community and will work with our legislative Equality Caucus, the State Department of Health, and our statewide LGBTQ+ commmssion toward that end,” he added.

Speaker Saiki will present Judge Foley and Justice Levinson with legislative certificates in appreciation for their role in marriage equality and for their commitments to public service.

“The ACLU of Hawai‘i has been at the forefront of the fight for the rights of our LGBTQ+ community members in Hawai‘i. We are co-hosting this event to celebrate the groundbreaking work of Dan Foley as a litigator and Steven Levinson as a jurist and community advocate for marriage equality,” said ACLU of Hawai‘i Executive Director (Interim) Scott Greenwood. Justice Levinson also served on the ACLU of Hawai‘i Board of Directors after retiring from the bench in 2009.

“We are delighted to join Speaker Saiki and the ACLU of Hawai‘i in publicly expressing our appreciation for those who were key allies in the struggle for marriage equality. The steadfast resolve of community members like Genora Dancel and Tom Ramsey were also vital in building a better future. We are honored to stand on their shoulders as we work daily to promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma with our state’s sexual and gender minorities,” said HHHRC Executive Director Heather Lusk.

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Hawai‘i Health & Harm Reduction Center serves Hawai‘i communities by reducing harm, promoting health, creating wellness, and fighting stigma of HIV, hepatitis, homelessness, substance use, mental illness, and poverty in our community. The ACLU Hawai‘i’s mission is to protect the civil rights and liberties enshrined in the state and federal constitutions through litigation, legislative and public education programs statewide.