



SENT VIA ELECTRONIC EMAIL AND FAX

September 6, 2011

State Rep. Doreen Costa
39 Dyer Ave
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Dear Rep. Costa,

I write to you today in your capacity as a state legislator and leader in the local Tea Party organization. Yesterday, we learned that former US Senate candidate Sharron Angle will be in North Kingstown tomorrow to speak at a political rally, in which I assume you will participate. Throughout her relatively short time in the political arena, Ms. Angle has demonstrated an alarming propensity to align herself with anti-gay organizations, and holds positions that a majority of Rhode Islander would find troubling.

During her last campaign, Ms. Angle responded to a questionnaire from the "Government is Not God" Political Action Committee. In that questionnaire, Ms. Angle not only professed her opposition to marriage equality, but opposed "adding 'sexual orientation' as a protected minority under existing civil rights laws."

I would remind you that there are a number of general laws already in place in Rhode Island meant to protect LGBTQ and minority citizens from discrimination. Specifically:

- RIGL 12-19-38 Imposes enhanced punishments for offenses committed against persons and property "because of hatred of or animus toward the actual or perceived disability, religion, color, race, national origin or ancestry, sexual orientation, or gender of that person or the owner of occupant of that property."
- RIGL 42-28.2-8.1 Provides for mandatory training for police officers in identifying, responding to and reporting hate crimes
- RIGL 42-28-46 Provides for the collection of hate crimes data
- RIGLS 28-5-6, 34-37-3 & 11-24-2.1 Prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing and public accommodations

Based on her questionnaire answers, Ms. Angle would have us repeal these laws, and move Rhode Island back to a time when housing and workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity were common.

Additionally, Ms. Angle does not believe that gay and lesbian couples in loving, committed relationships should be allowed to adopt children. According to the Williams Institute report on Rhode Island's most recent census data, there are approximately 693 same-sex families currently raising children in this state. Would Ms. Angle destroy these families solely based on the parent's sexual orientation, a position that is as morally bankrupt as it is offensive?

I recognize that you do not currently support marriage equality for all Rhode Islanders, but surely you cannot endorse Ms. Angle's narrow-minded and discriminatory positions relative to LGBTQ citizens.

Therefore, on behalf of the tens of thousands of supporters of equal rights for gay and lesbian Rhode Islanders, I am asking you to contact the Tea Party Express and Ms. Angle's political organization and inform them that her discriminatory principles are not welcome in the Ocean State. Furthermore, I would hope that you would disavow any association with a group that, through its promoted speakers, endorses bigotry and intolerance towards LGBTQ Americans.

I look forward to your timely response and thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration and appropriate action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martha Holt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Martha Holt, chair
Marriage Equality Rhode Island