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**Statement for Immediate Release
May 26, 2009**

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT LEGALIZES DISCRIMINATION
California Women's Law Center and Equal Rights Advocates Brace for More Wide Spread Discrimination

LOS ANGELES, CA – May 26, 2009 – The California Women's Law Center and Equal Rights Advocates are stunned and saddened by the California Supreme Court Ruling to uphold Proposition 8 in banning same-sex marriage.

"Our nation has long recognized marriage as a fundamental right, and taking away this right by the initiative process is both legally absurd and disheartening," stated Katie Buckland, executive director of the California Women's Law Center.

"We are outraged that the California Supreme Court has allowed the initiative process--with a bare 52% of the vote-- to take away a fundamental freedom from gay and lesbian Californians and to relegate them to second class citizenship with respect to marriage," stated Debra A. Smith, senior staff attorney with the Equal Rights Advocates. "Proposition 8 was just as morally wrong with respect to same sex marriage as "separate but equal" was with respect to race in education."

Although we are gratified that the Court left the 18,000+ same sex marriages intact, the decision as a whole leaves all Californians vulnerable," stated Laura Brill, partner Kendall, Brill and Klieger.

Background

The writ petition from the two women's groups came on the same day as another filed by the California Council of Churches and a variety of other faith-based organizations, as well as a petition filed by a group of civil rights organizations that included the California State Conference of the NAACP, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. All of these, as well as an earlier lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Lambda legal and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, argued that Proposition 8's revision to the California Constitution could not be enacted by a simple majority voice.

A copy of the California State Supreme Court's decision and the writ petition filed on November 17, 2008 are available at www.cwlc.org and www.equalrights.org. The women's groups are represented on a pro bono basis by Laura W. Brill and Richard M. Simon of Kendell, Brill and Klieger and Moez M. Kaba and Mark A. Kressel of Irell & Manella LLP.

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About The California Women's Law Center

Founded in 1989, The California Women's Law Center (CWLC) works to ensure, through systemic change, that life opportunities for women and girls are free from unjust social, economic, and political constraints. At least 75% of legal services clients in California are women and their children. Almost 50% of families in poverty are headed by a single parent, and more than 75% of those families are headed by women. CWLC has unparalleled expertise in women's legal issues and in effective strategies to protect and advance women's rights. For more information about CWLC, please visit our website at www.cwlc.org.

About Equal Rights Advocates

Equal Rights Advocates has led the legal fight for women's equality since 1974. ERA's mission has been to protect and secure equal rights and economic opportunities for women and girls through litigation and advocacy. For more information about ERA, please visit www.equalrights.org.

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