

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

11-6-2009

November 6, 2009: Hopeful Signs in the Vote in Maine

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2009). November 6, 2009: Hopeful Signs in the Vote in Maine. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/354>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: Hopeful Signs in the Vote in Maine

Date: 2009-11-06T08:30:00.005-05:00

11/6/2009—It must be an age thing. While many people are bemoaning the vote in Maine last Tuesday that repealed Maine's progressive gay marriage legislation, I was amazed and gratified that 47% of any State would vote to support gay marriage. There are two aspects to the vote. First is the nature of representative government. I don't like it when judges force gay marriage on the people. But conservatives have been arguing that legislatures are now doing the same thing when they vote for gay marriage. That is not true and conservatives should know better. The framers of the Constitution did not give us direct democracy. They thought representative government was a better system and they were right. When legislatures vote for gay marriage, they are doing precisely what they were elected to do. Conservatives usually agree that representative democracy is best, until it is politically convenient for them to believe otherwise. Most of the time that legislatures do the right thing, whether protecting workers, improving schools, stopping global warming, or defending minorities, a direct vote might overturn the result, and in fact sometimes does in states where that is allowed. Direct democracy is subject to the corrosive effects of big money advertising and widespread prejudice to a greater extent than is representative democracy. Actually 47% support shows that the Maine legislature was not at all out of touch with the electorate in passing the original gay marriage legislation. A fair housing ordinance protecting people of color would probably garner less than 47%. The second aspect of the vote is that clearly in five years this vote will go the other way. There are now estimates that the electorate is moving to support gay rights at about 2% per year. That is part of the inevitability of gay marriage. For someone 57 years old, like me, the growth in public acceptance of gays over my life has been breathtaking. It is the simple power of truth and justice.