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For Immediate Release

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Gary Johnson supports marriage equality

San Francisco, CA / Boston, MA • December 2, 2011 — In an historic move, Republican presidential candidate and former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson decided last night to support marriage equality. He is the second Republican presidential contender to do so, following Fred Karger in March. Johnson made the announcement in an on-line Town Hall co-hosted with GOProud, an organization of gay conservatives.

Having long supported civil unions for LGBT couples, he decided to support full marriage equality after “a great deal of deliberation, discussion with the gay community, and a conclusion that government has no business choosing who should be allowed the benefits of marriage and who should not,” according to his press release.

Johnson also sees no justification for the Defense of Marriage Act or similar governmental measures that restrict marriage rights to couples consisting of only one man and one woman. He believes that government should not interfere with how marriage is treated as a religious ceremony, sacrament, or a privilege within a set of religious beliefs, but also believes that regarding the rights of individuals and couples under the law, government should ensure equal access to civil rights for all Americans.

“We applaud Gary Johnson for supporting equal marriage rights for all loving, committed couples. Our relationships and our rights should not be political footballs to be tossed around in an election campaign, and we urge the other candidates to join him and Fred Karger in taking this stand in favor of basic fairness,” said Stuart Gaffney, Marriage Equality USA Media Director. “We look forward to a time when our fundamental rights are no longer campaign issues, and Gary Johnson has moved us one step closer to that reality today.”

Marriage Equality USA’s “Election 2012” table is a side-by-side comparison of presidential candidates’ plans for America’s 31 million LGBT citizens (www.MarriageEquality.org/Election2012). Since 15 August, over 78 articles about the comparison table were published in magazines, Web sites, and newspapers, including *The Wall Street Journal*. This week’s update marks the 11th time since the project began that a candidate has changed a stance. “The data we report is used by voters, journalists, and, of course, the candidates,” says Project Leader Ned Flaherty.

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Founded in 2000, Marriage Equality USA® is a national grassroots organization working to secure legally-recognized civil marriage equality for all, at the federal and state levels, without regard to gender identity or sexual orientation.