

Town of Provincetown



Town Hall, 260 Commercial Street
Provincetown, Massachusetts 02657
Facsimile (508) 487-9560
Telephone (508) 487-7000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26, 2004

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Provincetown voted last night to temporarily suspend the Town's policy of accepting Notices of Intention to Marry from out-of-state same-sex couples who indicate that they do not intend to reside in Massachusetts.

The Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts last Friday asked the Town of Provincetown, along with the Towns of Worcester, Somerville and Springfield, to cease and desist from accepting Notices of Intention to Marry from so-called "category three" couples and invited the Towns to provide an explanation for their policies.

Board of Selectmen Chair Dr. Cheryl Andrews stated, "We firmly believe that it is unlawful and unconstitutional to deny out-of-state same-sex couples the right to marry in Massachusetts. The Governor's last minute policy change reverses decades of practice welcoming out-of-state couples to Massachusetts who wish to marry to here. We were very disappointed to learn of the Attorney General's opinion concerning Chapter 207 because it requires us to discriminate against a group of people in violation of the Declaration of Rights," Dr. Andrews continued. "We understand, however, that there is currently a disagreement concerning the appropriate interpretation of Chapter 207, and we look forward to making our arguments known to the Attorney General."

Last week the Board of Selectmen retained Boston attorney Gretchen Van Ness as Special Counsel to advise the Board on the implementation of the *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* decision recognizing the right of same-sex couples to marry.