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## **Dáil Debates Marriage for Lesbian and Gay Couples.**

This evening, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December, the Dáil will debate the recommendations of the Constitutional Convention on Same-Sex Marriage. The Convention voted overwhelmingly in April to recommend that the Government hold a referendum on equal access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples. The Dáil debate is part of the process of responding to the Constitutional Convention.

**“Today’s debate is a great opportunity to demonstrate the very significant political and public support for full constitutional equality for lesbian and gay families.** Ireland has made huge progress in evolving towards full equality and civil marriage for lesbian and gay people and all political parties have played critically important roles in getting us this far” said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

**“The Government’s acceptance of the Constitutional Convention recommendations and today’s Dáil debates are two more historic steps in the remarkable 20 year journey from gay law reform to full Constitutional equality for lesbian and gay people in Ireland”** said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

The Government announced in November that they had decided to accept the recommendations of the Constitutional Convention and hold a referendum on equal access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples in 2015. The Government also accepted the second recommendation of the Constitutional Convention to prioritise family law changes that would recognise and support lesbian and gay headed families. The Taoiseach subsequently declared his support for marriage and said that he will campaign for it in the forthcoming referendum.

**“We also strongly welcome the Government’s commitment to prioritise parenting legislation.** There are lesbian and gay couples all over Ireland who are bringing up children. These families urgently need legal recognition and protection – the protections and certainty that other families take for granted.” said Rose.

**“With the comprehensive rights and obligations of civil partnership already in place, which were strongly supported by all parties in the Dáil, and forthcoming family recognition legislation, civil partners, including those parenting children, would have almost all the legal rights of marriage except equal protection in the Constitution.** The Government recent historic decision to hold a referendum on marriage in 2015 would be the final step in a remarkable journey to full constitutional equality for lesbian and gay families in Ireland” concluded Rose.

**Ends**

**For further details contact:**

Brian Sheehan            GLEN            (086) 2330417

Tiernan Brady            GLEN            (087) 8505972

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**Editors Note:**

**1. Department of Justice Briefing Note** can be found [here](#).