



10 April 2013

Response to dismissal of legal challenge of Section 377A

We are disappointed by yesterday's dismissal of one of the two challenges to Section 377A of the penal code, a colonial import that criminalises sexual activity between males even under consent and in private. Section 377A is highly discriminatory and similar laws have been repealed in other developed societies decades ago.

Section 377A continues to affect the lives of not just gay Singaporeans, but Singapore as a whole. Many of our friends and family have relocated or are actively considering relocation. Among them are advanced degree holders from world-leading universities, researchers, bankers, musicians and teachers. This brain drain is highly unfortunate and could have been prevented if they felt that their skills and lives would be appreciated here. Many of them feel that the retention of Section 377A is an open signal that the Singaporean government and society do not want them here, or only look at them as goods that should be exploited for talent and money. A significant number would move overseas just to be enjoy equal rights, i.e., the rights already extended to heterosexual individuals. Current research at Columbia University, pending publication, suggests that a high percentage of gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals in Singapore (60.87 percent) want to get married and nearly half (47.83 percent) want to have children, both of which are, obviously, nowhere near being considered.

The Purple Alliance will continue to work towards fairness and equality. We promote the welfare of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals by empowering real people to share their stories and talents, providing services to support them in leading dignified lives, and helping them communicate. By ensuring that these stories and conversations are shared, we will increase understanding, promote acceptance, and advance equality. We support research concerning LGBTQ issues in Singapore, provide high-quality resources, and are open to working with external groups and interested individuals on projects that support the dignity of LGBTQ individuals and that nurture positive relations with the public.

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