



Same-sex marriage is about rights

As I am writing about the article regarding the marriage equality vigil held in Lancaster on March 26. I appreciate reporter Karen Shuey's effort to talk to people and get an idea of why we were there. I would like to clarify that neither I nor my friends made the statement that we are proud of our sexuality and don't care who knows it. While I do try to live an authentic life, I am neither proud of nor ashamed of my sexuality.

Obviously, gay rights issues are based upon sexual orientation. If women weren't drawn to women, or men to men, gay rights battles would not exist. I object to this characterization of my remarks because it does not accurately convey what I said and, more importantly, because for so many people, sex is what comes to mind immediately when issues around gay equality are brought up. They don't see the middle-aged couple who has been together for 20 or more years, dealing with the same life decisions as any legally married heterosexual couple.

They don't see the shattered world of a woman who must defer to the wishes of "blood" relatives when her long-term partner dies. They don't see gay couples living the same day-to-day lives as heterosexual couples -- going to work, paying bills and caring for children and elderly parents.

Our conversation with the reporter was not about sexuality. It was about wanting gay couples to have equal rights when it comes to finances, taxes, end-of-life and medical decisions. It was about what happens when one partner in the relationship dies, and relatives

can take the couple's jointly owned property. It was about the often painful process of coming out to spouses and children. It was about the wedding of my daughter and son-in-law, where they affirmed their support of marriage equality by having a dear gay friend do a reading from the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage.

And it was about our faith that one day sexual orientation will be a non-issue.

Jeannie Graham, Marietta

Wrongly criticizing Pitts

Ms. Losco's letter of March 20, criticizing Rep. Joe Pitts' vote on the Violence Against Women Act is a sad attempt to deceive the public and attack the congressman's faith.

I am disappointed that Ms. Losco not only chose to distort the facts, but also turned a political disagreement into a personal attack. Congressman Pitts rejected the changes made to the legislation, which was originally written with bipartisan support.

The revised bill does not protect all women equally but instead permits funding for groups that specifically categorize women according to their sexual orientation. All programs and victims of domestic and sexual abuse should receive equal access to these funds, regardless of sexual preference.

If you're going to question Rep. Pitts' religion and proclaim that he does not support women's rights, then you're forgetting that he supports

one of our most fundamental rights: the right to life.

Rep. Pitts has been an unapologetic opponent of abortion, which has been used to specifically terminate a pregnancy once the sex of the child is determined. In most cases, these children are female.

To conclude that the congressman's vote means that he does not support prosecuting offenders or is helping to lead a fight against women is unfair and untrue.

Cindy Lonergan, Manor Township

State stores not friendly to consumers

Recently, I visited a "Total Wine" store in Delaware. As I walked through the parking lot, I was amazed to see that every car, except one, was from Pennsylvania. It made me wonder how much tax revenue Pennsylvania is losing to other states.

The store itself was very clean and had huge selections of wine, beer and liquor.

The following day, needing to "special order" a quantity of wine, I visited the largest state store in my area. Compared to what I experienced the day before, I found it to be small and cramped.

I placed an order for premium wines and put several hundred dollars down to secure it. Weeks went by before I was informed that none of the wine I ordered was available.

It was suggested that I should call the state store 800 number to find out what was "really" available. I did, and I received a recorded message saying, "All of their agents are busy," and that I should leave my phone number."

Six days later, I got the call. The person on the end of the line seemed totally disinterested in my displeasure at the lateness of the call.

Still needing to buy wine, I went back to the same store and placed another order. As of this writing, I have received no wine nor had any update.

I expect that an organization fighting for survival would have gone to great lengths to preserve its job security by offering good service. I was wrong.

So, my bottom line is this: How do I handle this ethical quandary as I have exhausted all avenues open to me to procure my choice of wine on a timely basis in Pennsylvania? Do I go out of state for the type of service a consumer should expect, or do I continue to accept the incompetence of our present state-controlled system?

Larry Gray Sr., West Lampeter Township