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Statement of Gloria Allred

Next month on April 28, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in two cases (one from Michigan and the other from Kentucky) which challenge the legal ban on same sex marriage.

Today we are honored to be joined by the courageous couple April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse from Michigan, whose case will be decided by our nation's highest court. Their case is DeBoer v. Snyder and the decision in their case will have an impact on marriage equality nationwide because in granting the petition for writs of certiorari, the U.S. Supreme Court said it would answer the following question: "Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex?"

April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse are hospital nurses who adopted four children, two of whom have special needs, and all of whom are here with us today. They began their legal battle because they wanted to protect their children. They were concerned that Michigan adoption laws only allowed one parent in an unmarried couple to adopt and if that one parent were to die, the other might lose custody of the children. Michigan also banned same sex marriage, so that they were unable to marry to protect the children.

They went to trial and a Michigan judge ruled in their favor. On appeal, however, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit ruled against them, and upheld Michigan's ban on marriage equality for same sex couples. The U.S. Supreme Court then granted a writ of certiorari in their case.

We are very proud of April and Jayne and of their two attorneys, Dana Nessel and Carole Stanyar who have fought so hard for them. Dana and Carole have fought this battle and spent countless hours preparing for trial in this case and winning.

Then they had to invest more hours attempting to protect their victory before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, which ultimately upheld the ban on the right to marry for same sex couples in Michigan. Undaunted, however, they have continued their battle and their outstanding lawyering and the issue in their case will now be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am very proud of these brave and exceptional women lawyers, who have earned their rightful place as outstanding civil rights lawyers and legal pioneers. I am also pleased that my clients, Robin Tyler and Diane Olson have joined us today.

In 2004, I became the first lawyer in California to announce that if Robin and Diane were denied the right to marry here that we would file a lawsuit and challenge the ban on the right to marry in California. They were denied a marriage license and then we filed a lawsuit and won the right in the California

Supreme Court for them and many other same sex couples to marry in California. Because we were the first to challenge the ban, Robin and Diane then became the first same sex couple to marry in Los Angeles County in 2008, and they have continued their leadership on this important issue ever since.

Tonight, Robin and Diane and I will be hosting a reception for April, Jayne and their lawyers at 7:30 pm at the Founders Metropolitan Community Church at 4607 Prospect Avenue in Los Angeles. We invite the public to attend this free event so that they can meet April and Jayne and learn more about how they can support their legal battle and their non-profit “National Marriage Challenge.” April and Jayne should not have to wage this battle alone, because we all have a stake in the outcome.

“Love can’t wait.” Couples like April and Jayne who just want to protect their family and be afforded all of the rights that other couples enjoy and should not be forced to wait any longer to enjoy the right to marry. As the U.S. Supreme Court said when it struck down state bans on interracial marriage in *Loving v. Virginia* in 1948: “There can be no doubt that restricting the freedom to marry solely because of racial classifications violates the central meaning of the Equal Protection Clause.

These statutes also deprive the Lovings of liberty without due process of law in violation of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.”

We are now on the next legal frontier and we look forward to the decision on this right to marry case in June. It is long overdue for April, Jayne and thousands of other couples to enjoy the rights, respect and dignity that they so richly deserve.

Note: For the full story of April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse, please see Dailymail.com today.

**Gloria Allred
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March 6, 2015**