



# **The Limits to Union: Same-Sex Marriage and the Politics of Civil Rights (Law, Meaning, And Violence)**

*Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller*

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Revised and updated to include the most current information on same-sex marriage, *The Limits to Union* documents a legal struggle at its moment of greatest historical importance.

"*The Limits to Union* is a superb book about the complexities of recent political struggles over same-sex marriage. Goldberg-Hiller offers a sophisticated account of egalitarian rights advocacy and the reaction it has generated from established majorities animated by a 'new common sense' of exclusionary sovereign authority. The author's analysis is multidimensional and nuanced, but the core argument is bold, important, and well-supported. I recommend it very highly to everyone interested in understanding the character, possibilities, and constraints of civil rights amid our contemporary culture wars."

-Michael McCann, author of *Rights at Work: Pay Equity Reform and the Politics of Legal Mobilization*

"In this excellent book, Goldberg-Hiller uses Hawaii's experience to examine the interaction between courts and the political system. . . . Relying on briefs, legislative statements, and interviews with activists from both sides of the question, he views this familiar debate . . . through the unfamiliar prism of gay marriage, which allows him to gauge the viability and the pliability of the American civil rights ideal, and how gay and lesbian issues fit (or don't fit) within that ideal."

-William Heinzen, *New York Law Journal*

"Goldberg-Hiller presents the history of the same-sex marriage question since it first sparked debate in Hawaii. He follows the shifting debate through court cases, state propositions, and state and federal legislatures, considering questions about the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act and the concept of equal protection under the law for gays and lesbians. This detailed treatment of the legal issues surrounding same-sex marriages is highly recommended."

-R. L. Abbott, University of Evansville

"[A] valuable contribution to the field, situating the gay marriage debate in broader contexts of theory, law and practice. [S]ame-sex marriage is an important issue...that finds itself caught in the friction points of

much larger debates over the nature of rights, the limits of sovereignty and the proper role of courts and law in a democratic society. *The Limits to Union* should therefore be of interest even to those who do not think of themselves as interested in gay and lesbian rights issues."

-Evan Gerstmann, Loyola Marymount University, Law and Politics Book Review

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