LOVE, AND 1,138 OTHER REASONS TO MARRY
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As the lesbian daughter of a lesbian mother growing up in the 1980s rural American west, I was acutely aware that laws did not exist to protect my family. We were “those people,” a phrase that has been used to describe different groups in different eras in the United States. “Those people” have been (among others) slaves, immigrants, the poor, blacks, women— and in my childhood— AIDS spreading queers. Many people don’t believe the law should apply to us, that we don’t deserve equality. My thesis is that the law not only should, but does, apply. We must all be treated equally.

In the written part of my thesis, I use the framework of the Constitution along with relevant statutory and case law to show that denying marriage to same-sex couples is illegal in the United States. Because there are 1,138 federal laws and programs that are in some way dependent on marital status, marriage is the fastest way to equalize the most people under the most laws. LGBTQ people are just like everyone else in America with similar lives and values. The big secret in the LGBTQ community is that we are just as boring as everyone else.

For the artistic parts I have created ten hand painted fabric flags, forty color photographic portraits, and sixty-six printed pages showing all 1,138 federal laws. All these parts hang on clothesline to signify that our lives should no longer be treated like dirty laundry as they have been in the past. The flags graphically illustrate the progression of marriage rights, the progression of hope, in each U.S. state, a currently very dynamic legal battlefield. The series of portraits of the Utah LGBTQ community show our humanity and tell the personal stories of those affected by the lack of full civil rights. The portraits are an attempt to show a deeper truth about our everyday lives. We are your neighbors, family members, elected officials, and children’s friends. We are everywhere. It is time for you to see us, to realize we are just people, living the same lives, dreaming the same dreams.