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Legalizing marriage equality would be economically good for business in Japan

Five foreign chambers of commerce call for marriage equality for same-sex couples in Japan in proposal published today

(TOKYO, JAPAN – SEPTEMBER 19, 2018) The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) today published a Viewpoint recommending to the Government of Japan the extension of freedom to marry to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) couples as good for business in Japan and strengthening the country's status on the international stage. The Viewpoint has also been endorsed by the Australian & New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ANZCCJ), British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ), Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) and Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce (IJCC).

Specifically, the Viewpoint calls for the removal of handicaps facing companies doing business in Japan in recruiting and retaining talent, and in treating the full diversity of their workforce equitably.

The five chambers of commerce see the benefits of a commitment to marriage equality as three-fold:

- 1. International Competitiveness: The Cost of Attracting and Retaining LGBT Talent**

Japan is competing for talent on a worldwide scale. Currently, 25 countries that legalized marriage equality have a competitive advantage over Japan because they offer LGBT talent a more inclusive environment, granting same marital rights to all couples, regardless of gender.

- 2. Encouraging a More Diverse and Productive Workplace Environment**

Expanding the freedom to marry would help close the gap in treatment between LGBT couples and their married peers, supporting the former to feel more comfortable being true to themselves and allowing them to contribute their full creative energy in the workplace.

- 3. Supporting a More Diverse and Inclusive Community**

In the workplace, 47% of LGBT individuals who are not “out” feel isolated, and this “invisibility” is considered a major psychological obstacle to their sense of wellbeing at work.

These five chambers of commerce believe these commitments to be foundational elements of a work environment conducive to maximum productivity, and to achieving workplaces that are demonstrated to be more productive for all employees.

Public support for same-sex marriage is growing, both within Japan and internationally. Legislating the requisite changes would result in concrete benefits for the LGBT community, for all companies doing business in Japan and for Japanese companies doing business abroad. In addition to benefitting the country's overall economic competitiveness, extending the right to marry to same-sex couples would positively impact Japan's reputation on the world stage by demonstrating its continued commitment to individual liberty and progressive ideals.

For these reasons, the ACCJ, ANZCCJ, CCCJ and IJCC strongly recommend to the Government of Japan that it adopt the extension of freedom to marry to same-sex couples.

With the 2020 Olympics fast approaching, they recommend that the time to do so is now.

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