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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, made the following remarks on the House floor in opposition to H.R. 3313, the Marriage Protection Act.

"I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote against this bill. The Marriage Protection Act would strip the jurisdiction of federal courts to hear cases interpreting the Defense of Marriage Act or the Federal Marriage Statute.

"First, this bill is wrong because it will strip federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of their ability to hear and review Constitutional cases, something that Congress has never done in our history. The courts are an equal branch of our government. Any attempt to weaken their authority undermines a 200-year precedent and severely endangers the separation of powers that our government is based on. The fact that this kind of action has never been undertaken in the history of this great nation speaks to the absurdity of the bill.

"Second, this bill is discriminatory. It singles out one group of people and tells them their interests won't be heard by the highest courts in the land. This sends a chilling message, not only to the citizens of this country, but to people all over the world that the United States is moving backward, not forward on issues of civil rights.

"Mr. Speaker, no legal crisis exists. This bill is all about politicsâ€ driving a wedge between people on the eve of party conventions and a national election. It's not only cynical, it's a disservice to the people we represent. What we do with this issue will be forever remembered. I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill. By casting a no vote, we say no to discrimination and state our unwillingness to upset the balance of the equal branches of government."

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