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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.J. Res. 106, the Marriage Protection Amendment.

"I come to the floor today to express my strong opposition to what is an assault on our Constitution, H. J. Res.106, the Marriage Protection Amendment.

"Constitutional amendments can never be taken lightly. Our Constitution has been amended only twenty-seven times in the two centuries since our country was founded, but it's never been amended to limit the civil rights of a specific group of people as we are doing here today.

"Few policy issues are more grounded in the jurisdiction of the fifty states than the laws of marriage. As Vice President Cheney said in a recent interview, 'Historically, that's been a relationship that's been handled by the states,' and 'States have made the basic fundamental decision [as to] what constitutes a marriage.' I agree with the Vice President. Should this legislation pass, not only would state courts be prohibited from recognizing same-sex marriages, but states would also be prohibited from enacting legislation to grant same-sex marriages through referendum, ballot initiative, or even through their own state constitutional amendment process, even in states where the majority supports it.

"As I strongly oppose the content of this legislation, the Majority's motivation to consider it today is raw politics. Bringing this legislation up weeks before our national elections, divides this nation even further at a time when critical issues and needs must be addressed. We should be using this time to focus on the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission; on the restructuring of our intelligence community; on protecting our ports, nuclear facilities and other potential targets from terrorists; on the rising health care costs in this country; on the loss of jobs throughout this country; on reducing our spiraling budget deficit; or on the rapidly deteriorating situation in Iraq. Instead, one month before the election, we're debating an amendment to our Constitution that has no hope of enactment, but merely because the Republican Majority believes they will be able to score points with this ill-begotten bill.

"Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation and get back to work on the critical needs facing America."

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