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Gay marriage is a blessing for economy

San Francisco Business Times - by [Jim Haas](#)

The California Supreme Court's momentous decision legalizing same sex marriages could have a substantial effect on the State's economy. So far the discussion has focused on tourism with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger exclaiming that the court's decision will be great for the tourist business. Moving right along, the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau launched a campaign encouraging people to marry in San Francisco. The Williams Institute at UCLA estimates that same sex marriages will pump \$684 million into the state's economy over the next three years.

However, tourism is only its most superficial effect on the state's economy. Same sex marriage and the attempt by fundamentalist interests to repeal it through a Constitutional Amendment this November go to the heart of the state's new economy and repeal could profoundly effect it.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, economic development depended on such factors as the availability of raw materials, cheap labor and transportation. In the 21st century, the factors which stimulate the greatest growth and creation of wealth are a well educated population and an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship. Richard Florida in his book "The Rise of the Creative Class" has analyzed this economic phenomenon by identifying the places in the United States which have had the best economic record and then applying to them various creative indexes. The places which have exceptional growth are also the places the rank high on these indexes. On his composite national "Creativity" index, San Francisco Bay Area ranks first, San Diego third and Los Angeles 12th.

Among Florida's indexes, the one which tracks creativity best is his "Gay and Bohemian." Some commentators derisively characterized Florida as saying a community will become rich if it has lots of gay and lesbians. However, Florida found that communities with large number of gays and lesbians and artists project an image of tolerance, openness and diversity which attracts creative people of all types. Where there is a large talent pool of such people, business thrives.

James W. Haas is a San Francisco attorney.

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