

I'm grateful to Equality Utah for accepting our invitation to debate. For their part, it takes a certain amount of courage to put themselves out here.

I had no pre-conceptions about what would happen tonight when I extended the invitation, nor do I now. We're certainly not here to change each other's minds about where we stand on the Common Ground Initiative. Both sides, I think, understand that we're here for those of you listening to our conversation.

Sutherland's specific role tonight is to oppose the Common Ground Initiative and to oppose it substantively in the face of direct examination.

In doing so, both sides will be tested in civility as much as in our logic. But I do want to make clear that *my* remarks, at least, while intentionally provocative to push the debate, are not meant to be personal. The difficulty with this disclaimer, of course, is that my opponents, as well as many of you in the audience, will take my remarks very personally. Though unavoidable, under the circumstances, my words address the public debate, not what I or my colleagues think about you, individually, or your worth and dignity as human beings.

But for tonight anyway, the gloves must come off. The fact remains that we don't just disagree with you over the Common Ground Initiative; we disagree with you over nearly every motivating assumption that underlies the Initiative.

We're dealing here with two separate realities: one truth, one illusion. The intellectual, legal, and moral chasm between the two sides is so great that true common ground is nearly impossible to achieve.

And so, for my part anyway, I'm here to argue that the Equality Utah version of "reality" is an illusion.

The CGI bills constantly refer to "sexual orientation." Sexual orientation is an illusion. It only exists in the minds of activists and their academics who need to explain away why people do what they do even when they don't want to do it. There are no replicable scientific or medical studies that this thing even exists. Never mind that the only way it can be identified is through sexual behavior. There's no reasonable argument to be made that

subjective feelings or attractions toward another human being means anything deeper than what it actually is.

The truth is that we are born male and female with moral agency. Because it's behavior, our sexuality is always a choice – and any other sexual construct is an illusion.

Your idea of “rights” is an illusion. With the backing of every miserable, misanthropic philosopher of the post-Enlightenment era, your Initiative feeds on the unreasonable notion that you have these magically organic rights to do whatever you desire.

These rights are usually couched in terms of “equality,” but because you constantly confuse what you *do* for who you *are*, your equality is illusory. You think your equality is about *who* you are when it's really *only* about what you do – and, in terms of human behavior, there's no equality as you try to imagine.

The truth is that our rights are inherited, not organic, and as such are intertwined in the lives of everyone else. In other words, your behavior is measured against the lives of other people, cultures, morals, and traditions.

Your equality does not stand alone. While we are equal human beings, we certainly are not equal in human behaviors.

Your ideas about marriage and family are an illusion. The very nature of your relationships means that you only “act out” – you *play* house as only a dysfunctional household structure can allow. You think a piece of paper magically bestows upon you a real marriage. You think calling yourselves a family makes you a family. You think having *the state* call you a family makes you a family. And, in a very immature emotional frame of reference, you think love *alone* makes a family.

The truth is that a family is more than just people who love each other. A real, functional family structure is a lasting institution that has a past and a future tied together intergenerationally. The true tests of a functional family structure are both that it lasts through generations and that it doesn't need the state to create it.

Your ideas about gender roles are an illusion. You think genders come on a menu from which you can choose.

What irony is it that the *one* time when you actually *could* invoke the claim that you're born a certain way, you refuse to? Instead, you have ump-teen different genders to choose from.

I'm sure you have an answer to the question that should be on everyone's mind right now: I'm dumbfounded how you can think that someone's sexual *behavior* is innate, but the very thing that makes them human – their maleness or femaleness – is malleable.

But it's the idea of gender *roles* that thoroughly disgusts you. In your illusory world, men and women are not only *not fixed* by gender, they're interchangeable. Two mommies, two daddies, who cares? There's no difference to you. Again, all that matters is that people love each other.

The truth is maleness and femaleness are innate – and *that* fact matters – and it matters a lot, especially in the life of a child.

There's a complementarity between men and women, bonded by marriage and child-bearing, that helps to build a safe and healthy haven for men, women, and children to develop their fullest potentials, not to mention that also benefits society.

Perhaps tonight our side can finally get an answer to a perplexing question. We know how you *personally* benefit from gaining all of the privileges you seek. What we want to know is how *society* benefits?

So much of your reality is illusory. Your politics. Your political surveys. Your ability to work effectively and respectfully within democratic processes.

Do you seriously think that pressing the LDS Church, by trying to publicly embarrass it, is how you find common ground? Seriously?

Do you really think that the numbers you receive from unprofessional polls and surveys mean that a vast majority of Utahns actually support your causes?

Do you seriously think that publicly thanking Governor Huntsman means he'll fight for your cause against an obstinate Legislature?

Do you really believe that the best way to help your cause in a legislative committee is for one of your own to tell her colleagues that they're voting for discrimination if they don't vote *her* way? Seriously?

Who draws up these plays for you guys? I'd like to know because maybe we'll put them on the Sutherland payroll to ensure victory after victory!

But I know you don't do what you do *politically* because you're stupid. I know you're not. You consistently make the poor choices you do because your reality is an illusion.

Every bill in your Initiative has, in its own way, one or more of these illusions in play.

You ask for employment and housing rights because of who you *think* you are (or worse, because of how you perceive others' perceptions of you) and not because of what you actually *do* as an employee or a tenant.

You ask to adopt children because of who you *think* you are, notwithstanding a *vastly* more important point, having to do with what you actually *aren't*.

You pull these gimmicky, unnecessary proposals out of the magical hat of rights you wear – matters that you already have the legal right to do through private contracts – because of who you *think* you are.

We really do live in separate realities – our two sides – and in those separate realities there is no common ground.