

WHY MARRIAGE SHOULD NOT BE REDEFINED

OVERVIEW

The New York State Legislature will soon consider a bill that would radically change the definition of marriage to include same-sex relationships. Marriage has always been defined in our culture as a union of one man and one woman, dedicated to the good of the spouses and for the procreation and education of children.

The “Marriage Equality Act” would re-define marriage to ignore the fundamental biological fact that the union of man and woman is the only relationship that is capable of—and designed for—uniting them and creating and nurturing children. Same-sex relationships just cannot fit into that definition. Same-sex couples certainly have the right to live as they wish, but nobody has the right to re-define marriage and parenthood for all of society.

Why Does the Church Oppose Redefining Marriage?

The Church’s opposition to same-sex “marriage” is not based only on doctrine and revelation, but on common sense and social science as well.

Social scientists agree with the Church that marriage has an essential role in the stability of society because it is about both adults and children. It is the natural way to bring a man and woman together, and it binds a father and mother to each other and to their children.

Every well-ordered society in history has made a special effort to protect and encourage marriage as an institution that fulfills spouses and protects their children.

How Would Redefining Marriage Affect Other Marriages, and Society as a Whole?

A radical change in the definition of marriage fundamentally undermines the foundation of society and hurts every marriage:

- The meaning and purpose of every marriage would be changed. Marriage would no longer be about children or future generations, but would be merely a private relationship of consenting adults that is solely about satisfying their desires.
- It would send a message that mothers and fathers don’t matter to children—even though all evidence shows that the best outcome for a child are in a stable marriage with his mother and father.
- The door would be opened for other destabilizing social “developments” like polygamy.

Does Redefining Marriage Threaten Religious Liberty?

The real threat to religious liberty is the bill’s failure to include an exemption that would permit individuals and organizations to decline to recognize same-sex “marriages,” if that would be against their religious beliefs. Without this, same-sex “spouses” will be able to bring complaints against religious institutions, businesses and individuals under various state and local anti-discrimination and human rights laws.



WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO DEFEND MARRIAGE?

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

- **Pray.** Ask God to grant our elected officials the wisdom to recognize the importance of marriage, and to defend it.

- **Keep yourself informed.** Visit the Family Life/Respect Life Office website for regular updates and more resources at www.flrl.org/Defend_Marriage.htm

- **Contact your Senator and Assembly representatives** and urge them not to redefine marriage.

Send them an email. Visit the Catholic Advocacy Network online (www.nycatholic.org and click on “Take Action”) to find a sample email. You can also put it in your own language.

Write them a personal letter. For a sample letter please visit www.flrl.org/Defend_Marriage.htm

The legislators’ addresses are:

New York State Senate, Albany, NY 12247

New York State Assembly, Albany, NY 12248

If this bill is passed, churches could be:

- Denied public contracts or grants
- Required to hire same-sex partners and give them the same benefits that are given to spouses
- Denied licenses to operate hospitals and social service agencies
- Required to teach about same-sex marriage in their religious schools
- Stripped of their tax exempt status.

Individuals as well could be at risk of losing business permits and professional licenses if they decline to recognize same-sex “marriages” for religious reasons.

Is it Unconstitutional to Distinguish Between Same-Sex “Marriage” and Traditional Marriage?

No. The New York State Court of Appeals, the highest court of our state, held in 2006 that the current law of marriage—which only recognizes the union of one man and one woman—is not unconstitutional, and that there is no “right” to same-sex “marriage.” The Court held that the current law has a rational basis in the nature of one man-one woman marriage as the best place to have and raise children.

Is it Discrimination to Oppose Redefining Marriage?

It is not improper nor discriminatory to treat same-sex relationships differently than marriage because they are fundamentally different in nature. Different kinds of personal relationships are not treated in an identical way under the law—friendships, grandparents and single parents are not given the same legal benefits as married couples because they do not have the same social importance as marriage. This is not “discrimination,” but the proper use of legislative discretion—treating different things in different ways.

Is the Church’s Opposition to Redefining Marriage Based in “Homophobia”?

No, but there are many people who falsely accuse the Church of “hatred” or “bigotry” because we defend the definition of marriage. That in itself is a threat to religious liberty.

See what the Bishops of New York State have said:

“(W)e want to make absolutely clear that our firm beliefs about marriage...must not be misconstrued to be in any way a condemnation of homosexual people or an attack on their human dignity. Our Church teaches, and we affirm, that we must treat our homosexual sisters and brothers with dignity and love, as we would all God’s children. Indeed the Catechism of the Catholic Church warns that any form of prejudice or hatred—‘every sign of unjust discrimination’—against homosexual people should be avoided.”

(CCC 2358)

Read the full text online: www.flrl.org/Defend_Marriage.htm

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