

Redefining marriage: What are the consequences?



OCTOBER, 2012

When marriage law is redefined, it changes marriage for everyone and poses real threats to religious liberty, parental authority, personal freedom and the good of society.

How does redefining marriage threaten parental authority?

- In Massachusetts, where same-sex marriage was legalized by the state's highest court, students are taught about gay marriage in public school classrooms and the courts have ruled that parents have no right to prior notice, or to opt their children out of such instruction.
- Eighteen first-grade students in San Francisco took a school-sponsored field trip to attend the wedding of their teacher and her lesbian partner in October 2008. The school principal described it as a "teachable moment."

How does redefining marriage threaten personal freedom?

- In Vermont this summer, an innkeeper was forced to pay \$30,000 to settle a lawsuit brought by two women for refusing to host the couple's wedding reception. The inn no longer hosts weddings or receptions.
- In Canada, where same-sex marriage has been legalized, Roman Catholic sportscaster Damian Goddard was fired from his job for expressing support for traditional marriage.
- Accusations that it is "anti-gay" have been leveled at Chick-Fil-A, because its founder offered a personal statement supporting traditional marriage. Mayors in several major cities denounced the company for its "discriminatory views" and have threatened to prevent the company from operating in their cities.
- In August a gunman entered the offices of the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C. with intent to kill staff members because the organization defends marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The Family Research Council has been branded by one same-sex marriage advocacy group as a "hate group" because of its support for traditional marriage.

How does redefining marriage threaten religious liberty?

- A Methodist organization in New Jersey lost its state tax exemption for refusing to make their facilities available to a same-sex couple for a civil union ceremony.
- Forced to choose between their ministries and Catholic teaching, Catholic Charities in Boston and Washington D.C. closed their adoption agencies.
- In Canada, where same-sex marriage was being debated, Father Alphonse de Valk, a Basilian priest, was investigated by the Canadian Human Rights Commission for a 'hate act' after quoting extensively from the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II's encyclicals to defend traditional marriage.
- In Alberta, Canada Bishop Fred Henry was subject to a human rights complaint for stating in a pastoral letter the position of the Catholic Church on same-sex marriage.

How does redefining marriage threaten the good of society?

- In Brazil, where civil unions are legal, a partnership between three partners was registered earlier this year. After review of the law, it was determined that no legal impediments existed to prevent their union – a union for which no word existed in Portuguese.
- The California Legislature has passed a bill to legalize families of three or more parents.
- In Spain, where same-sex marriage has been legalized, birth certificates substitute the terms "Progenitor A" and "Progenitor B" for "Mother" and "Father."

*For additional resources regarding marriage and Referendum 74,
visit the Washington State Catholic Conference website: www.thewsc.org.*

Referendum 74: What you should know



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On November 6 the people of Washington State will vote on Referendum 74, a ballot measure that will ask voters to “approve” or “reject” a new law that legalizes marriage between couples of the same sex.

State law has always defined marriage as a “civil contract between a male and a female.” If voters do not reject Referendum 74 marriage would be redefined as “a civil contract between two persons,” in order to allow persons of the same sex to marry.

Referendum 74 as it will appear on the ballot:

“The legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6239 concerning marriage for same-sex couples, modified domestic-partnership law and religious freedom, and voters have filed a sufficient referendum petition on this bill.

“This bill would allow same-sex couples to marry, preserve domestic partnerships only for seniors, and preserve the right of clergy or religious organizations to refuse to perform, recognize or accommodate any marriage ceremony.”

Should this bill be: Approved Rejected

Although the Church teaches that people with same-sex attractions must be treated with respect, compassion and sensitivity, free from all unjust discrimination, it also teaches that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Therefore the law redefining marriage should be rejected.

The Church recognizes the union of a man and woman in matrimony as a fundamental good and foundational to human existence and flourishing. Marriage is of paramount importance to families and society.

Referendum 74 would redefine marriage, but it does not grant any new legal rights for couples of the same-sex in Washington State. In 2009 a law was passed that granted registered domestic partners every legal benefit enjoyed by couples in traditional marriages.

Legalizing marriage between persons of the same sex would result in a radical change in law and society. Referendum 74 would change marriage for everyone, and poses real threats to parental authority, personal freedom, religious liberty and the good of society (see reverse side for details).

Civil marriage law exists to promote the best environment for the health, welfare and education of children. If Referendum 74 is not rejected, a new legal entitlement for adults is created and the right of children to be united with their mother and father is jeopardized.

By separating marriage from procreation and the responsibility of men and women to raise children that result from their sexual union, Referendum 74 would abandon the state’s principal interest in this time-honored institution; namely, the best interest of children and families.

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