

Position Statement Regarding the Minnesota Marriage Amendment

*"The strength of our state and our nation lies within the strength of our families."
Abraham Lincoln*

Marriage between one man and one woman has played a pivotal role throughout history as the basic foundation of the family, community and society. Countless studies confirm the optimal environment for raising a child is in a home with a mother and a father. Marriage deserves an important and hallowed place within our culture.

We oppose legislative and judicial attempts to redefine marriage or to create a legal status similar to that of marriage. Observations from other countries that have embarked upon similar social experiments suggest potential catastrophic consequences, including:

- Destroying marriage and the family as we know it today by separating marriage and parenthood from procreation, ultimately depriving motherhood and fatherhood of all juridical meaning and putting the state in charge of determining which adult or group of adults to which a child belongs;
- Forcing public schools to adopt and promote a redefined notion of the family, contrary to the wishes of most parents;
- Restricting religious liberties by the state mandating the church recognize alternatives unions to man-woman marriage; and
- Limiting freedom of speech by preventing individuals who disagree with alternative unions from publicly voicing their opinions, including the reading of certain Bible passages.

Existing laws have proven to be inadequate protection for marriage. Since 1971, marriage laws have been challenged in 47 states. Activist judges have overturned marriage laws in 9 states, including those with laws nearly identical to that of Minnesota. A number of state legislatures are also actively working to establish legal unions that are equivalent to marriage in all but their name.

In response to these threats, the citizens of 27 states have amended their state constitutions to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The majority of these amendments also preclude the creation of a legal status similar to marriage. Nearly all of these states already had state marriage statutes on their books, but chose to elevate the protection of marriage to the level of a constitutional amendment.

The Minnesota Marriage Amendment bill would allow voters to decide whether our state constitution should be amended to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Polls have shown that a supermajority of Minnesotans believe they should have the opportunity to vote on this issue. Since the Minnesota Marriage Amendment bill was first introduced in 2004, a majority of Minnesota state legislators have repeatedly thwarted the will of the people by blocking this bill. Their actions violate a basic premise of our democracy. State legislators are elected to represent their constituents, not deep-pocketed special interest groups or their own personal political motivations. Legislators who are clearly out-of-step with their constituents must be held accountable by the voters. Minnesotans should elect state legislators who are fully committed to allowing the people to decide the future of marriage in our state.