



Iowa Catholic Conference

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Why support an amendment?

- The people of Iowa should have an opportunity to directly vote on a critical issue such as the definition of marriage.
- Marriage between a man and a woman is a gift from God which is essential to the stability and growth of society.
- Marriage hinges upon sexual difference. Sexual difference establishes an openness and mutual receptivity between persons of the opposite sex which allows them to truly become one on every level of their being in the marital act. It is not discrimination to treat different things differently.
- The “traditional” family is a time-tested environment, on the average, for raising healthy children. There should be a reasonable expectation that the state will protect and promote the importance of a mother and a father.
- The ability of many religious organizations to live out their teachings will be diminished.
- The Supreme Court is currently free to further define marriage in any way it decides.

Questions and Answers on the Marriage Amendment in Iowa

Why do the Catholic bishops support amending Iowa’s constitution?

On April 3, 2009, the Iowa Supreme Court struck down the state’s marriage law, making it legal for two members of the same sex to marry. In response, the Iowa Catholic bishops support amending Iowa’s Constitution to define marriage as a union of one man and one woman.

The amendment wording simply states that “Marriage between one man and one woman shall be the only legal union valid or recognized in this state.” Amending Iowa’s Constitution requires that two successive General Assemblies pass the legislation which would then put the amendment to a vote of the people of Iowa.

The Supreme Court decision on marriage is controversial and deserves further consideration by the people of the state of Iowa. We believe that the people of Iowa should be able to vote on such an important issue, and that can only take place if the legislature takes action.

What is the Church’s basic teaching on marriage?

The Catholic Church believes and teaches that marriage is a faithful, exclusive, and lifelong union between one man and one woman. Marriage exists so that the spouses might grow in mutual love and, by the generosity of their love, bring children into the world. Catholic marriage is based on a personal relationship of life-giving love in which a man and a woman make the love of Christ present to each other and become a sign of that love to those around them. This takes place most completely when men and women give themselves to each other within the sacra-

ment of marriage. Marriage is a gift from God which is essential to the stability of family and society.

The fact that we are created as male and as female makes it possible for us to cooperate with God in creating new life. Even if every marriage does not result in children, the fact that marriage between a man and a woman will usually result in children remains a powerful reality for our society.

The Church’s teaching about marriage and civil society is clear. In his most recent en-



cyclical letter, “Charity in Truth,” Pope Benedict XVI said, “States are called to enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman, the primary vital cell of society, and to assume responsibility for its economic and fiscal needs, while respecting its essentially relational character.”

More Questions and Answers

Why is it so important that marriage be preserved exclusively as a union of a man and a woman in civil law?

Support for a union of one man and one woman is based on common sense and good public policy because the traditional family is a time-tested environment for raising healthy children. Marriage as we have known it for millennia has made a unique contribution towards the creation of healthy families and a stable society. On the average, children who are raised by a married father and mother have more positive outcomes, including behavioral and educational accomplishments.

Unfortunately, for the first time in Iowa, marriage law now guarantees that some children will not have a mom and a dad in the home. In addition, public schools will teach Iowa's children that same-sex marriage between a man and a man, or a woman and a woman, is just as good as a marriage between a man and a woman.

The Supreme Court decision has also opened the door to redefining additional relationships as marriage in the future.

Why is the church concerned about religious liberty as it relates to marriage?

Religious groups play an important role in supporting a marriage culture that benefits society. In other places where same-sex relationships have been recognized as marriage, the church's ability to bear witness to and live out its teachings in all activities has been diminished. We are especially concerned about the provision of social services and the educational ministry of our state-accredited Catholic schools.

Isn't denying marriage to homosexual persons unjust discrimination and showing a lack of respect to them as persons?

"It is not unjust to deny legal status to same-sex unions because marriage and same-sex unions are essentially different realities. In fact, justice requires society to do so." *Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-sex Unions, USCCB, 2003*

Catholics believe that marriage between a woman and a man, and same-sex unions, are essentially different. The state can rightly give certain benefits to married couples that it does not extend to others. Property rights, hospital visitation, and other rights can be addressed without changing the definition of marriage.

Our support for a constitutional amendment is not because of animosity or ill will toward any person or group. The Church strives to model God's love for each and every person. We uphold the right of all people to be treated with respect and live in peace. This right derives from the intrinsic dignity of the human person.

Why is the Church getting involved in politics?

As Catholics, we believe our involvement in civil life is an essential part of the mission Jesus gives us. Therefore our faith calls us to form our conscience and take action in service of what is good and true. The bishops' role is to help us form our conscience so that we make sound moral judgments. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Church avoids endorsing or opposing candidates or political parties.

How can I help with this issue?

- Contact your legislator by a phone call, meeting, or an email through the "Action Center" at www.iowacatholicconference.org and ask for his or her support of the marriage amendment.
- Learn about the church's teaching on marriage at www.foryourmarriage.org.
- Pray for single people and couples that they might faithfully live out their vocation in today's society.
- Help build up society from within by supporting married people and their decision to have children.
- Educate friends, family and fellow parishioners on the church's teaching on marriage. Don't be reluctant to take part in the public conversation in our state and discuss the truth about marriage.

