



Dedicated to Strengthening the Family

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO H1709, WHICH WOULD REPEAL THE LAWS
SETTING STANDARDS FOR SEXUAL ETHICS AND OTHER LAWS PROTECTING
PUBLIC SAFETY**

Joint Judiciary Committee

March 4, 2008

This bill would do enormous damage by repealing a host of laws designed to protect the public safety and welfare. Some of the laws are obviously out of date, such as the prohibition of vendors selling their wares or maintaining horses within a mile of a “camp meeting.”

However, other sections of the bill repeal laws apparently because they use outdated terminology, such as “tramp,” “vagrant,” or “vagabond.” I question, however, whether the sponsor of this bill seriously considered the consequences of repealing those laws. For example, a “vagabond” is defined as a person known to be a pickpocket, thief or burglar acting in a suspicious manner in a crowded area. Do we really want to block police from arresting someone like that?

Then there are the sections that repeal the laws against adultery and fornication. Those laws have probably not been enforced recently, but do we really want to send the message to our young people that we no longer have any standards of morality or ethics regarding faithfulness in marriage, or sex outside of marriage. Is that really what we want to do? Or is that what a radical fringe wants to do – remove all boundaries or guidelines for sexual behavior so that anything goes? Those laws were put in place for good reason, and the good reasons still stand. Marriage deserves legal protection from outside seduction, and the sexual instinct of the young should be channeled into the constructive outlet of marriage. Sex outside of marriage has caused endless harm – broken hearts, broken lives, children without fathers, poverty, disease and crime.

The bill would also eliminate protection for women from **unlawful** abortion. Most abortions are now legal. The only abortions that are illegal in Massachusetts are those performed by unqualified persons in an illegal setting. Why would we remove this minimal protection?

This bill is detrimental to the well-being of our society, and we ask that it be rejected.

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