



*Dedicated to Strengthening the Family*

## **TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB1710, EQUAL ACCESS TO CIVIL MARRIAGE**

### **Joint Committee on Judiciary**

March 4, 2008

Massachusetts Family Institute is a research and public policy institute dedicated to strengthening families in Massachusetts. The definition of marriage is a most significant issue to us. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in opposition to House Bill 1710, An Act to Protect Massachusetts Families Through Equal Access to Civil Marriage.

Throughout the course of human history, marriage has been a permanent relationship between a man and a woman for the primary purpose of procreation and nurturing of children. This universal concept transcends all cultures and religions. Marriage protects children, men and women, and the common good. The health of marriage is particularly important in a free society, which depends upon citizens to govern their private lives and rear their children responsibly.

More than ten thousand social studies have concluded that children do best when they are raised by their mother and father in a committed married relationship. They are less likely to be on illegal drugs, less likely to drop out of school, less likely to commit suicide, less likely to be in poverty, less likely to become juvenile delinquents, and for the girls, less likely to become teen mothers. Children who are not raised by their biological parents are at a greater risk of depression, suicide, child abuse, domestic violence, academic failure, criminal activity and poverty.

The two sexes are different to the core, and each is necessary – culturally and biologically – for the optimal development of a human being. *The American Journal of Sociology* finds that “Societies with father-present patterns of child socialization produce men who are less inclined to exclude women from public activities than their counterparts in father-absent societies.” Girls and boys with married mothers learn from their mothers what a healthy respectful female relationship with men looks like. Girls who observe their mothers confidently and lovingly interacting with their fathers learn how to interact confidently with men.

Conversely, same-sex marriage teaches the next generation that there is nothing special or unique about male and female, husbands and wives, and mothers and fathers. It separates marriage from its great, historic, cross-cultural task of bringing together male and female to procreate and nurture the next generation. This radical social experiment was forced upon the citizens of Massachusetts through a judicial fiat by the State Supreme Judicial Court, but the institution of marriage belongs to the people. Only the people, not the courts or the legislature, can legitimately change the definition of marriage. To date, the citizens of the Commonwealth have been denied the right to vote on the

definition of marriage despite polls showing that upwards of 75% of registered voters desire to do so.

Codifying same-sex marriage into law will establish same-sex marriage as public policy and ultimately impact individuals, organizations and institutions who do not conform to this standard. Broadcasting stations could lose their licenses and non-profit organizations their tax-exempt status. We have already witnessed Catholic Charities being forced to stop providing adoption services. Likewise, the courts arbitrary ruling on same-sex marriage has emboldened the opponents of natural marriage to now demand radical transgender rights and file a number of lawsuits nation-wide for the legalization of polygamy and polyamory. Once marriage becomes anything, it becomes nothing.

Marriage has been significantly weakened by divorce, illegitimacy, and cohabitation, with serious negative consequences for society as a whole. No-fault divorce, America's last radical social experiment, has raised millions of children in fatherless and motherless families with stunning failures by every measure. Let us not create more child-suffering to satisfy adult sexual desires. A wise and compassionate society always comes to the aid of children in motherless or fatherless families, but a wise and compassionate society never intentionally subjects children to such families.

Families, religious communities, community organizations, and public policymakers must work together towards a great goal: strengthening marriage so that each year more children are raised by their own mother and father in loving, lasting marital unions. The future of the American experiment depends on it and our children deserve nothing less.

For these reasons we recommend the Joint Committee issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 1710.

Sincerely,

Kristian M. Mineau  
President