



## **June 28, 2006 - Gov. Romney Joins Civic and Religious Leaders to Urge Passage of Protection of Marriage Amendment**

### ***Allowing citizens the right to define marriage in Massachusetts***

Boston – Appearing today with a broad array of religious, civic and political leaders, Governor Mitt Romney urged the Legislature and its leaders to bring the Amendment to a “fair vote” during the Constitutional Convention on July 12.

“It is the constitutional duty of every legislator to give the Protection of Marriage Amendment an up or down vote during this legislative session,” said Governor Romney. “The people have a right to decide this issue, but they can only do so if the Legislature does its job.”

Standing today with Governor Romney in support of the Protection of Marriage Amendment, which would allow the voters of the Commonwealth to determine the definition of marriage in Massachusetts, were Seán Cardinal O’Malley, OFM Cap, Archdiocese of Boston; Bishop George Coleman, Diocese of Fall River; Bishop Robert McManus, Diocese of Worcester; Dr. Roberto Miranda, Chairman, VoteOnMarriage.org; Kris Mineau, President, Massachusetts Family Institute; a bi-partisan group of state legislators and other Amendment supporters from government and the private sector.

Cardinal Seán O’Malley said, “Marriage is the foundation of family life in our society. People of many faiths and from many walks of life have joined us to support marriage as being only the union between one man and one woman. The debate over the meaning of marriage should not be limited to government officials. The magnitude of the issue calls for full participation by the citizens of the Commonwealth. We urge our legislators to let the people exercise their right to vote.”

“Governor Romney has said all along that the people’s voice matters, and today he has demonstrated that leadership again by focusing public attention on those in the state legislature who are strategizing to deny Massachusetts citizens the right to vote on marriage,” said Kris Mineau, President, Massachusetts Family Institute and Spokesman for VoteOnMarriage.org.

According to media reports, legislative opponents of the Amendment are considering a variety of parliamentary procedures to avoid a clear yes or no vote on the Amendment—constitutionally known as “final action” by the legislature and a requirement for all citizen-initiated petitions, such as the Protection of Marriage Amendment.

“We know that the absence of fathers in our neighborhoods contributes to the culture of violence,” said Rev. Alexander Hurt, Kingdom Church-Brockton. “The marriage amendment says to our community, ‘both mothers and fathers matter’ in the development of healthy families and healthy communities.”

“Unelected judges have conjured up their own interpretation of marriage and family,” said Rev. Roberto Miranda, Chairman, VoteOnMarriage.org. “This amendment is the only way the people of Massachusetts can determine for themselves how the society they live in and contribute to should define marriage.”

VoteOnMarriage.org – the campaign to allow voters to decide on the definition of marriage in Massachusetts – collected over 170,000 petition signatures last fall in support of the Protection of Marriage Amendment. The Secretary of the Commonwealth certified the petitions last December, moving the Amendment to the state legislature where it requires the vote of 50 lawmakers this year and next year before going to the voters in 2008. Governor Romney supports the Protection of Marriage Amendment and the people’s right to define marriage and family for themselves.

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