



June 29, 2006 - June 28 State House Press Conference on Marriage Amendment - Cardinal O'Malley remarks

In February of 2004, religious leaders in Massachusetts signed a statement supporting the proposed constitutional amendment to safeguard the traditional definition of marriage. Among the signers were leaders of the four Roman Catholic dioceses, the Black Ministerial Alliance, Orthodox Churches, various Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopalian communities, Jewish congregations, the Islamic Council of New England and Vision New England Churches. The signers of the statement represent over 3,000 congregations in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This is neither a Catholic nor a sectarian issue, it is a human issue. For thousands of years the institution of marriage, geared toward the rearing of children, has been the cornerstone of human society. Where marriage is weakened, the social cost is enormous. We have a duty to pass on a strong institution of marriage for the good of future generations. To redefine marriage as merely an arrangement among adults undermines the family and will have serious consequence in the future.

Marriage is by its very nature oriented toward having children and raising them in a family. The complementary characteristics of a mother and a father contribute so much to the development of healthy and well-adjusted children. Many families without the advantage of a stable loving union of husband and wife, such as single parents and grandparents raising children, do an admirable job. Yet most people are quick to recognize that the optimal venue for children is to be born and raised in a family where the father and mother are in a permanent, loving commitment. This reality deserves to be protected by the State.

Last fall a petition drive for the constitutional amendment obtained 170,000 signatures - the highest number of signatures in the history of initiative petitions. We are asking the legislature to allow the citizens of our state to vote on this crucial institution.

Regrettably, this is a very divisive issue. So much polarization has been precipitated by the Supreme Judicial Court, which by one vote has threatened the oldest and most foundational of human institutions. We urge the legislature to let everyone's voice be heard. Let the people vote.

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