

A Response to Gay Marriage Advocates

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On November 7th, Wisconsin citizens will get the opportunity to protect marriage by writing the definition of marriage into the State Constitution. The amendment will appear on the ballot like this: "Marriage. Shall section 13 of article XIII of the constitution be created to provide that only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state and that a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state?"

What are the points of contention that opponents bring up over this amendment?

1) We should not be writing discrimination into our Constitution. Constitutions are for protecting rights, not taking them away. 2) Why should the government interfere with people's personal decisions? 3) What is wrong with two people of the same sex loving and raising a child, in comparison to a heterosexual couple? 4) What about health care benefits for same-sex partners? 5) What about hospital visitations and inheritance rights shouldn't same-sex couples be allowed to have those privileges too?

What are the answers to these points?

Constitutions are for protecting rights, not taking them away. 1) It would not be writing discrimination into the Constitution. Right now, statutory law says that marriage is between a husband and a wife (which has traditionally been interpreted by the courts as a man and woman; however, Massachusetts judges did not see it that way). Furthermore, statutory law lays down the legal requirements: a. Must be 18 years or older. b. Must not be currently married. c. Must not be closely related to your future spouse. d. Must be of the opposite sex.

Anyone can abide by these requirements. It's not saying that someone of a certain race cannot participate or someone of a certain gender cannot participate. It simply lays down rules for what civil union society sees as most beneficial to the general populace. Society has an interest in child rearing and child development. Someday those children will grow up and pay taxes (or receive taxes). The government has an interest in marriages being strong and fruitful. This is why they gave marriage a legal status in the first place. To open up this definition to anybody and any kind of relationship does nothing more than negate any and all legal benefits. Something cannot be considered special if everything else is considered special as well. As a side note, there is a handful of states that were required to write into their constitutions that polygamy (a personal life decision) be outlawed in their state before they were able to become a state. Utah was obviously one of these.

Why should the government interfere with people's personal decisions? 2) The government has made laws and rules that they deem best for society for a long time now. If the government were not allowed to do this, then we would have no government. We elect officials to represent our views and beliefs in a forum with other officials that represent others values and beliefs. If elected officials did not interfere and say that it is illegal for someone to murder someone else, then chaos would eventually reign supreme. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the law is the law and people can choose to obey it or not. This amendment does nothing more than reinforce what opponents of this measure seemingly admit is already there — that marriage is between one man and one woman.

What is wrong with two people of the same sex loving and raising a child, in comparison to a heterosexual couple? 3) This can be a touchy issue and often brings up emotional stories from people that try and sway opinion, but the bottom-line here is once again clear: A child being raised in a same-sex relationship inherently has three parents. This is not an optimal situation. An optimal situation would be when both biological parents have a child and raise that child together. This family unit has been proven time and time again to be the best for a child. Children raised in this type of family unit are more prosperous, healthy and happy than in any other type. Society promotes the optimal situation, not every situation. If society promoted every situation, then theoretically, they would be promoting no situation at all. I'm not saying that same-sex partners are bad parents. I'm not saying adopted children necessarily have a worse chance than un-adopted ones. I'm not saying biological parents are always great parents. I am saying that statistically speaking the core family unit of the biological mother and father is the best and to conduct experiments with

our future generation of children is neither wise nor acceptable.

What about health care benefits for same-sex partners? 4) This is a decision each business, municipality or government agency has to decide. The amendment will have no bearing on whether or not entities can or will give domestic partner benefits. When this topic is brought up, it should have the disclaimer that it is 100% speculation and not based on past precedents in other states. The government does not interfere with personal contracts between two private parties. That's what this is.

What about hospital visitations and inheritance rights shouldn't same-sex couples be allowed to have those privileges too? 5) This is my favorite argument. The clear and obvious answer is that anyone can have hospital visitation rights if they are stated in a power of attorney for health care document. The difference is that married couples receive the ability to make decisions for each other automatically after marriage, whereas same-sex couples would have to sign the aforementioned document. Also, a general power of attorney would provide finance sharing between the two and allocate one as the heir to the other's financial properties. This easily answers the 'inheritance question.'

In the end, redefining marriage to any 'loving relationship' would be a bad idea. It would create homes where the children have a 0% chance of having both of their biological parents. It would infringe upon freedoms of religion by teaching things contrary to the religious beliefs of many in public schools and potentially mandating ministers to marry same-sex couples if they want to keep their marriage licenses. It would open the door to allowing polygamy and polyamory (as long as it is a loving relationship of course). It would elevate and promote a lifestyle that has been proven to be unhealthy. Finally, it would devalue the institution of marriage into nothing more than one of the many options for people.