



Jan. 2, 2013

Dear Illinois lawmakers:

Marriage is the lifelong, faithful union of one man and one woman, and the natural basis of the family.

Marriage is an institution fundamental to the well-being of society because a stable, loving marriage is the ideal environment for raising children. Through marriage, children grow up knowing that they were created through an act of intimate love. Marriage is also beneficial for adults as the ideal structure for men and women to live interdependently, recognizing the equal dignity, beauty and value of one another while also relying on each other's care and love. This is the natural order embracing the complementary physical, emotional and spiritual design of men and women.

As such, marriage in its true definition has long been respected and publicly supported in our society. As religious leaders in Illinois, we find the continued affirmation of marriage between a man and a woman essential. The ongoing attempts to alter the definition of marriage in civil law are full of serious danger, primarily by degrading the cultural understanding of marriage to an emotional bond between any two adults and by giving rise to a profound interference with the exercise of religious freedom for those persons and religious institutions whose faith and doctrine recognize the spiritual foundation of marriage as an authorized union between a man and a woman.

Some claim that as long as religious ministers are not forced to preside over same-sex "marriages" the principle of religious freedom, as secured in the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment is protected. However, the notion that the exercise of religious freedom is confined to the interior of churches, synagogues, temples or mosques or what one does on Holy Days is wrong and dangerous. The freedom of religion also extends to the ministries of religious organizations and to the individual conscience. Thus, the real peril: if marriage is redefined in civil law, individuals and religious organizations – regardless of deeply held beliefs – will be compelled to treat same-sex unions as the equivalent of marriage in their lives, ministries and operations. Compulsion of this nature is a violation of personal conscience and of religious liberty.

We implore all people of good will to protect marriage and religious freedom. The far-reaching consequences of redefining marriage in civil law extend throughout society and will directly impact religious freedom. Marriage and religious freedom are ideals integral to Illinois, and our elected leaders should do all they can to maintain these important principles.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Belleville

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet

Council of Islamic Organizations of
Greater Chicago

His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago

Reverend Dan P. Gilbert
President, Northern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Peoria

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockford

Reverend Mark A. Miller
President, Central Illinois District
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

The Right Reverend Juan Alberto Morales, OSB
Bishop of Quincy, Diocese of Quincy
Anglican Church in North America

The Right Reverend Wesley L. Nolden II
Assistant Bishop of Quincy, Diocese of Quincy
Anglican Church in North America

Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

Reverend Timothy J. Scharr
President, Southern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Elder Jack Ward
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Pastors and members of the following churches also support this letter:

Generational Blessings
Flossmoor, IL

Living Hope Missionary Baptist
Chicago, IL

Philadelphia Missionary Baptist
Chicago, IL

Bibleway Ministries
Barrington, IL

Grace Temple Holiness Church
Chicago, IL

The Father's House Zion Church of God
Zion, IL

Total Christian Life Ministry
Joliet, IL

Christian Life Church
Mt. Prospect, IL

Empowerment Christian Center
Chicago, IL

Darion Ministries
Oak Park, IL

Sacred Mountain International Christian Center
Chicago, IL

Word of Grace Church
Chicago, IL

Evangelical Free Church of Sycamore
Sycamore, IL

Living Waters Presbyterian Church
Addison, IL

The Purchased Church of God
Chicago, IL

Chicagoland Church of God
Lincolnwood, IL

NuWine Ministries
Westchester, IL

Grace & Truth Apostolic Church
Evanston, IL

Deliverance Outreach Center
Chicago, IL

Polish Evangelical Fellowship
Chicago, IL

Montrose Baptist Church
Chicago, IL

Grace for Life Bible Church
Naperville, IL

Rock of Ages Baptist Church
Maywood, IL

Empowerment Christian Center
Chicago, IL

**Immanuel United Church of Christ
Peotone, IL**

**Evangelical Free Church
Crystal Lake, IL**

**Tree of Life Outreach Ministries
Chicago, IL**

**Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church
Chicago, IL**

**Pathway Christian Fellowship
Shorewood, IL**

**Prince of Peace Baptist Church
Chicago, IL**

**First Baptist of Marengo
Marengo, IL**

**Park Place Baptist Church
Montgomery, IL**

**New Life Ministries
Oak Park, IL**

**Covenant Chapel Baptist Church
Chicago, IL**

**H.E.L.P.S. Ministry
St. Charles, IL**

**New Life Deliverance Church
Chicago, IL**

**Greater Damascus Baptist Church
Chicago, IL**

**Outreach Fellowship Christian Center
East Dundee, IL**

**Life Changing International Ministries
Chicago, IL**

**Bethesda Worship Center
Des Plaines, IL**

**Storm of the Spirit Church
Chicago, IL**

**Christ Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
Chicago, IL**

**Worth Church of the Nazarene
Worth, IL**

**Peace of God Outreach
Waukegan, IL**

**Hosanna! Lutheran Church, LCMC
St. Charles, IL**

**Christian Tabernacle Church
Roselle, IL**

**Alpha Baptist Church
Bolingbrook, IL**

**Jesus Word Center
Chicago, IL**

**Jesus Journey Church
Bartlett, IL**

**True Witness Deliverance Ministries
Calumet City, IL**

**Living Word Christian Center
Chicago, IL**

**Cross & Crown
Chicago, IL**

**Grace Chinese Christian Church
Skokie, IL**

**Fox Valley Church of God
Geneva, IL**

**Lively Hope Church of God in Christ
Joliet, IL**

**First Saint Peter All Nation Church
Chicago, IL**

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