



Q&A About the Massachusetts Marriage Amendment

In November of 2003, by a slim 4-3 margin, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ordered the state to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Thanks to the SJC ruling, and without the people's input, Massachusetts is now the only state in the country that rejects the deeply rooted meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The people have a constitutional right, through the initiative petition process, to respond.

What is the Massachusetts Marriage Amendment?

The Massachusetts Marriage Amendment defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Brought forward by 170,000 citizens in the most successful petition drive ever, it would amend the state constitution if approved at the ballot. It passed the first of two required votes in the state legislature earlier this year. It needs another legislative vote at the next Constitutional Convention to be held on May 9, 2007. If adopted by at least 50 of the 200 legislators a second time, the Amendment would go on the statewide ballot for all citizens to consider in November 2008.

What does the Marriage Amendment say?

“When recognizing marriages entered into after the adoption of this amendment by the people, the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions shall define marriage only as the union of one man and one woman.”

Why is the Marriage Amendment a fair, open and balanced measure?

The goal of the Amendment is to protect the rights of all people: The right of children to be nurtured by their married mom and dad together, the right of citizens to vote, and the right of those needing essential care and support to receive it.

The Marriage Amendment leaves existing marriage licenses alone, thus passing constitutional scrutiny. It also leaves policy decisions about benefits, rights and privileges to the legislature. The Amendment restores the long-recognized definition of marriage, thus strengthening the family with fairness to all.

That's why VoteOnMarriage.org supports legislation to secure important rights for unmarried adults ineligible for marriage in such areas as hospital visitation, estate planning, home ownership and insurance coverage. Increasing benefits fairness, while at the same time reaffirming marriage as the union of one man and one woman, is a win-win solution for all.

Why should every legislator vote to send the Marriage Amendment to the ballot?

Massachusetts citizens are fair and tolerant—respectful of human differences. The people can be trusted to do what's right, taking into account the interests of children and of adults. They can weigh the consequences and make good choices. That's what a democracy is all about—giving people the opportunity to determine for themselves basic and fundamental questions.

For this reason, the state legislature should give final approval on May 9 to placing the Massachusetts Marriage Amendment on the November 2008 ballot. The debate was started by four unelected judges and has continued in the halls of the State House. Now it's time for the people to take part in the discussion, so that they can decide for themselves!

***No more delays. Urge Senate President Murray and your
legislators to vote YES on the Marriage Amendment May 9.***

**Call your Legislators: 617-722-2000. Tell Beacon Hill: Let the People Vote!
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