



Media Message Points about Civil Marriage and the proposed “Federal Marriage Amendment”

MESSAGE POINT: Marriage has two distinct components: civil marriage and the religious ritual of marriage. Each component has no bearing on the other.

Additional talking points: Mixed-gender couples can have a civil marriage without the religious ceremony/ritual. Couples can have a religious ceremony/ritual, without a civil marriage. Some couples can opt for both. However, to receive the legal protections of marriage, a couple must have a civil marriage, which is the only marriage that can be addressed by courts or legislatures.

MESSAGE POINT: Denying the rights and protections of civil marriage to same-gender couples creates a system of second-class citizens that harms and threatens the welfare of families and children.

Additional talking points: Denying the rights of civil marriage to a specific class of individuals which prevents couples from entering into a civil marriage contract, creates a subset of second-class citizens perpetuated by a system that is separate and inherently unequal. The 1000+ rights and legal protections of civil marriage that are given to mixed-gender couples and families should also be extended to couples and families who are headed by same-gender couples.

Additionally, denying protections to couples and families harms and threatens children who may depend on a family headed by a same-gender couple for insurance benefits, social security, and/or emergency hospital care.

MESSAGE POINT: The proposed Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) is anti-family, and seeks to impose one narrow definition of family on all US citizens.

Additional talking points: The US government should not be in the business of defining relationships or sanctioning family structures by denying benefits and protections to certain families while giving them to others, solely based on a single “religious” definition of marriage or family. Even religions don’t agree on a single definition of marriage or family, and the government has no business doing so for all U.S. citizens. By seeking to codify discrimination against same-gender couples and their families by amending the US Constitution, the government would be imposing one narrow “religious” view of marriage on all Americans, and denying 1000+ basic rights and protections to certain families.

MESSAGE POINT: If passed, the FMA would mark the first time in history that the US Constitution would be amended to codify discrimination, rather than extend rights to people.

Additional talking points: This proposed Federal Marriage Amendment is not about marriage, it is about discriminating against individuals and families. If passed, it would deny same-gender couples and families the 1000+ protections afforded to families headed by mixed-gender couples. This proposed amendment not only seeks to discriminate against same-gender couples and families, it would nullify existing domestic partnership and civil union laws, usurping state and local bills that grant equal rights to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people. Our Constitution was and is specifically written to grant rights to people, not take them away or deny people of basic rights and protections.

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Soulforce is a national interfaith movement committed to ending spiritual violence perpetuated by religious policies and teachings against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Soulforce teaches and employs the nonviolent principles of Gandhi and King to the liberation of sexual and gender minorities. For more information, see www.soulforce.org