



## AN URGENT SOULFORCE NEWS ALERT

From: Karen Weldin,  
Director of Operations

From: Laura Montgomery Rutt,  
Director of Communications



# HELP US DEFEAT THE SO-CALLED FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

### What is the Federal Marriage Amendment and Who Supports It?

In 2001, a coalition organized by Christian Fundamentalist leaders under the banner of the Alliance for Marriage, released their plan to add “The Federal Marriage Amendment” to the U. S. Constitution. Immediately, Falwell, Robertson, Dobson and every major antigay Fundamentalist organization launched campaigns to support this Amendment as a part of their unholy crusade against sexual and gender minorities.

On May 21, 2003, Conservative Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave introduced the FMA to the U.S. House of Representatives as House Joint Resolution 56. As of November 1, 2003, there were already more than ninety Congressional Co-sponsors.

Ironically, this amendment is NOT about “protecting marriage.” It is an attempt by fundamentalist Christians to deny permanently the civil rights of GLBT individuals, unmarried couples, and their families, and rob them of the more than 1,000 rights and protections that can be obtained through civil marriage.



*“Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.”*

—THE FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT



### Why Does the F.M.A. Threaten the Civil Rights of So Many Americans?

Notice the second sentence in the 51-word Amendment above. According to the ACLU, if this sentence is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, it would be “the legal equivalent of a nuclear bomb that would wipe out every single law protecting gay and lesbian families and other unmarried families as well.” In Andrew Sullivan’s words,

The F.M.A. is “the biggest assault on gay rights in U.S. history.”

### What Would Be The Tragic Consequences of the F.M.A. in the Lives of Same-Gender Couples?

1. **Nullify** domestic partnership laws in Vermont, California and in more than 100 counties, cities and towns;
2. **Prohibit** recognition of same-gender marriages conducted in Canada and prevent any of the 50 states from ever granting to same-gender couples the civil rights and protections that go with marriage;
3. **Prohibit** fifty state legislatures from expanding their civil rights laws to protect GLBT individuals, all unmarried couples, and their families.
4. **Undermine** state adoption, foster care, and child custody laws;
5. **Prohibit** state and local governments from deciding to provide benefits to their employees;
6. **Destroy** a wide range of rights that are important to the lives of all unmarried persons including state and local laws prohibiting discrimination based on ‘marital status’ and state laws protecting unmarried elderly couples who refrain from marrying in order to hold on to their pensions.
7. **Permanently deny** benefits for same-gender couples including: automatic inheritance, assumption of spouse’s pension, bereavement leave, burial determination, domestic violence protections, exemption from property tax on partner’s death, immigration rights for foreign spouse, insurance breaks, joint parenting (insurance coverage, access to school records), medical decision on behalf of partner, reduced rate memberships, sick leave to care for partner, social security survivor benefits, visitation of partner’s children, visitation of partner in hospital or prison, tax breaks, joint bankruptcy and at least 1,000 other benefits.

(over, please)

## How Are Fundamentalists Seeking to Misuse the Supreme Law of the Land?

1. To single out millions of Americans and their families for discrimination;
2. To superimpose their intolerant fundamentalist views on the entire nation;
3. To rob federal, state, and local courts of their right and responsibility to protect the civil rights of all;
4. To support their tireless campaign to deny all rights and protections to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and to drive them back into their closets (or worse).



### How Can You and I Help Defeat the Fundamentalist's Attack on Civil Rights?

1. **Investigate** the F.M.A. and decide for yourself if the Amendment should be defeated. *Check out: [soulforce.org](http://soulforce.org); [aclu.org](http://aclu.org); [hrc.org](http://hrc.org); [pfaw.org](http://pfaw.org); [pflag.org](http://pflag.org); [ngltf.org](http://ngltf.org); [now.org](http://now.org); [freedomtomarry.org](http://freedomtomarry.org)*
2. **Sign** the Soulforce Petition online at [www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org). *Also see if your organization, business, or church would be willing to sign the Petition.*
3. **Copy this flyer** and hand it to your neighbors, friends and family to help educate them about this harmful amendment. Email it widely. *You can download the letter, the Petition, a sample sermon, and other helpful data at [www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org).*
4. In addition, **Mail or Email** this Petition (or your own longer letter) to your State and Federal officials. *Find names and addresses of your Senator, Congressman or woman and your State Legislators at <http://congress.org/congressorg/> or use the Grey Pages in your local phone book.*
5. **Ask Pastors/Priests/Rabbis** or other faith leaders you know to sign the Soulforce Petition online. *Give them a copy of this flyer, our talking points, and the sample sermon, and ask them to talk about equal civil marriage rights from the pulpit.*

### The Soulforce Petition Opposing the "so-called" Federal Marriage Amendment

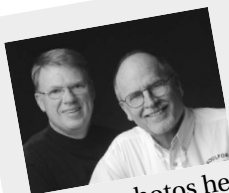
"As people of faith we are committed to working for justice and equality for all.

We stand firmly against amending the U.S. Constitution for the express purpose of excluding or discriminating against any group of individuals on the basis of a single shared characteristic, whether that characteristic is race, religion, nationality, ability, sex, gender identity, familial status, or sexual orientation.

We therefore oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment because it seeks to misuse the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights to discriminate against millions of American couples, families, and children and to deny them equal rights and protections under the law."

[THIS IS A SAMPLE. USE THE PETITION ONLINE. COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THIS FLYER WIDELY.]

### A Personal Note from Mel White, Executive Director



The photos here represent millions of American families who will face long-term tragic consequences in their lives if we don't defeat the F.M.A. Fundamentalists are raising millions to rob us of our civil rights. We cannot train, equip and mobilize volunteers to oppose them without your generous financial support.

If you have ever considered making a tax-deductible donation to Soulforce, you can donate online.

There are many organizations working to help stop the "so-called" Federal Marriage Amendment and they also need your support. No matter who you decide to give your financial support to, do it today.

Whatever you do, please go online and sign on to the Petition. Let us know that you are standing with us during these dangerous times.

*Mel White & Gary Nixon*  
Mel White and Gary Nixon, Co-Founders



**Soulforce, Inc., P.O. Box 3195, Lynchburg, VA.  
24503 • (877) 705-6393 • [www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org) •  
[info@soulforce.org](mailto:info@soulforce.org)**