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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

## WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

**2005-06**

(session year)

**Senate**

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and  
Privacy...**

### **COMMITTEE NOTICES ...**

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

### **INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL**

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)  
(**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)  
(**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                      (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

\* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (July 2012)

Dear Senators,

November 29, 2005

I believe that this amendment goes too far.

Not only does this amendment ban marriage for my parents, it also bans civil unions, and health insurance for one of my moms and my 13 year old sister, Rikaela Greane.

I think this amendment is wrong.

Discrimination against gay and lesbian couples is just not right!

The government is so stupid. It thinks that Shana is my mom and that Debra is my sister's mom. But both moms are my sister and I's moms. Why can't they understand that? No Idea. And that's why I'm trying to figure that out.

I turn 7 years old tomorrow and I want a birthday present from you Senators: Please vote no on the amendment to ban marriage and civil unions for gay couples.

Sincerely,

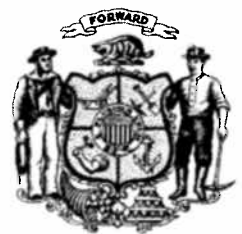


Aurora Greane

**Greane**  
512 Christianson Ave.  
Madison, WI  
53714



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Dear Senators,

November 29, 2005

Since the age of 5, I have known what discrimination against our family means. It means hurt. It means pain and stress and pressure. This amendment would visit discrimination on our family and families like ours. If this amendment were to pass, half of our family would lose health insurance, which we are now able to access through domestic partner benefits offered through the Madison school district. In addition to one of my moms already working full-time, my other mom would have to raise her level of working hours in order to provide health insurance for she and I. This would limit the amount of time she would have to home educate my 7-year-old sister and I. One of the reasons why we are homeschooled is to avoid the physical and verbal harassment that we would most likely experience in the public schools.

I currently take many and varied classes outside of home as well as the learning I do at home. I would most likely have to eliminate the volunteer work and learning activities outside of our home in order to remain at home and help take care of my sister. This is the domino effect that would be set in motion, in more than just my family.

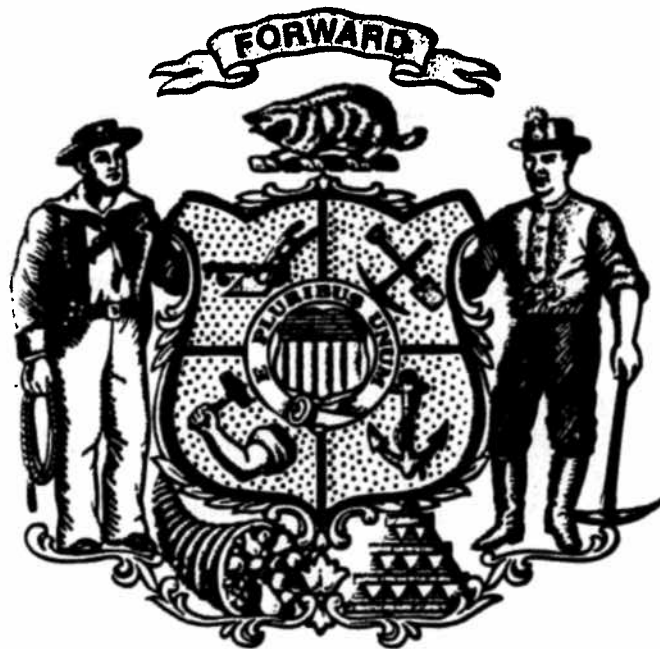
Please, I ask you on behalf of many other lesbian and gay families, vote no on this amendment.

Sincerely,



Rikaela Greane (13 ½ years old)

**Greane**  
512 Christianson Ave.  
Madison, WI  
53714



November 29, 2005

Dear Senators of the State of Wisconsin,

From the 100+ hours I have personally spent talking with voters across this state, I can confidently say that the majority of people in WI are not aware of this proposal to change our state Constitution. I can assert equally strongly that the majority of the people I've talked with are fair-minded in granting that, even though they may not understand or agree with "the gay lifestyle", they do not support changing our state constitution.

Most people do not realize that there is a distinction between social marriage ceremonies and the civil legal contract of marriage. Most people are not aware that there are over 1,000 rights and responsibilities that are granted through legal marriage. Only a handful of these can be accessed without a legal marriage contract (and incur significant lawyer fees in order to accomplish). One of these few benefits is domestic partnership benefits. According to WI State Journal reporters, both Madison and Dane County lawyers have found that domestic partnership benefits (access to health insurance and bereavement leave) would be dismantled if the amendment passes.

Most people do not want to harm others. Most people do not realize the harm in this proposed amendment to our state constitution. This amendment is harmful because it would dismantle current domestic partnerships. Taking away health insurance coverage threatens a family's well being.

Our family depends on the domestic partner benefits through my employer. Taking away our family's health insurance coverage does not help our society.

This proposal to amend our state constitution does not strengthen current heterosexual marriage. Instead, it would strengthen the "less-than" status of a portion of WI citizens (those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender). Using our state constitution to diminish the rights of some of its citizens is a misguided approach to helping our society wrestle with the meaning of marriage and family. The people of WI need more time to become educated on the social issue of legal marriage.

Please vote NO on the constitutional ban on marriage and civil unions for gay couples.

In the spirit of Democracy,

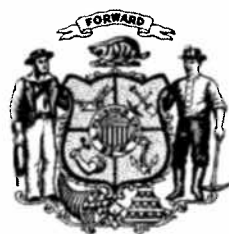


Shana Greane

Shana Greane  
512 Christianson Ave.  
Madison, WI 53704



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



GENE GREEN  
BAPTISTS FOR LIFE OF WISCONSIN

DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE HEARING  
November 29, 2005  
Madison, Wisconsin

Thank you committee for allowing the privilege of speaking here before you today. As Executive Director for Baptists For Life of Wisconsin, as an American and as a resident of this great state, I am honored to be able to exercise this great privilege of speaking on my convictions and strong beliefs/

I speak in favor of AJR 27 and SJR 53, which defines marriage as between one man and one woman. For several reasons.

First of all, I believe because of the current mind set in our country and State, the current law is flawed. Current law states that marriage is a contract which creates the legal status of husband and wife. The problem is that it does not define who is a husband and who is a wife. These terms can be used to define husband as the most dominant one of a couple and wife as the least dominant one of a couple. This opens the door to all kinds of problems in our current state of thinking in America and Wisconsin...

Traditional marriage and the stability of marriage is being attacked and assaulted from many areas, and we must do what we can to strengthen traditional marriage. The failure of too many traditional marriages has nothing to do with the issue we are dealing with today.

Morals and values are based upon natural law and Biblical Law. When we disregard either of these, then each becomes a law unto themselves and people do what is right in their own eyes. They do as they choose, make their laws and do as they please because they make their own laws and what we call right or wrong, they will say that is



an attempt to limit their freedom. If sodomy or homosexuality is not wrong, then who is to say that stealing and murder are not wrong? — page 3 —

We must define marriage as between one man and one woman as that is because what marriage is. Marriage is for children. That may sound strange, as it is adults who marry. The purpose of marriage is to create a stable family setting for children. A child needs a mother and a father, a male and female who are married and living in the same home with the children. This is a fundamental fabric of our society. Children depend upon their parents, a mother and father, to meet their basic needs. Marriage is designed to provide each child with a mother and father, in a stable family setting, during the years when children are too young to fend for themselves. To redefine marriage in such a way as to remove its essential connection to parenthood is to take away its very purpose. Yet I do realize that not all married couples are able to bear children.

What would happen if we said marriage doesn't have anything to do with mothers, fathers, and children? What would happen if we said marriage is really just about a couple of adults who love each other, and are committed to each other, whether man and woman or two people of the same sex? I have a loving committed relationship with several people, some friends and family members. That is not the same as the relationship that I have with my wife. My wife and I were at our daughters recently, and Charlie was there to greet us. He loves us, he was so excited to see us, and we love him and have a committed relationship with him to care for him if necessary. We love him. However, I would not marry Charlie; you see Charlie is a golden retrieve. If we don't define marriage as between one man and one woman, it will open the door to the slippery slope where a marriage is defined according to one's freedom of choice.

X This opens the door to the slippery slope toward bestiality, polygamy, incest, necrophilia, and other types of perverted relationships. . In fact, according to World Net Daily, Nadine Strossen, the president of the American Civil Liberties Union ,says “polygamy is among the “Fundamental rights” that her organization will continue to defend..”. This is an attack upon the very fabric of society. And there has not been until now any kind of a real assault on what marriage is supposed to mean, between one man and one woman.

*page 10* Both Holland and Scandinavia have redefined marriage, and traditional marriage is dying in both countries, couples put off marriage until they have a child or two. In Holland, marriage has been performed between a man and two women Marriage is a lifetime commitment between a man and a woman.

Quoting from an article in the Wall Street Journal – Feb. 5, 2004, by Governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney, after the Supreme Court of Massachusetts handed it ruling allowing same-sex marriage, in November of 2003 – I quote

X “Contrary to the court’s opinion, marriage is not “an evolving paradigm” It is deeply rooted in the history, culture and tradition of civil society. It predates our Constitution and our nation by millennia. The institution of marriage was not created by government and it should not be redefined by government.

— Marriage is a fundamental and universal social institution. It encompasses many obligations and benefits affecting husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter. It is the foundation of a harmonious family life. It is the basic building block of society: The development, productivity and happiness of new generations are bound inextricably

to the family unit. As a result, marriage bears a real relation to the well being, health and enduring strength of society.

Because marriage's pivotal role, nations and states have chosen to provide unique benefits and incentives to those who choose to be married. These benefits are not given to single citizens, groups of friends, or couples of the same sex. That benefits are given to married couples and not to singles or gay couples has nothing to do with discrimination: It has everything to do with building a stable new generation and nation." End of Quote

This is neither discriminatory nor a "rights issue." Single people are denied benefits of married couples, and in most cases, have chosen to be single. The homosexual has chosen his or her lifestyle, and they can change if they choose and there is a great and loving, powerful God who will enable them to do so through His precious Son the Lord Jesus Christ. **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away behold all things are become new. 2 Cor. 5:17**



We have just observed Thanksgiving Day. A day set apart in America to give thanks to the living Almighty God because of His blessings upon us as a Nation. Our founding fathers recognized the importance of the Word of God, of the blessings and goodness of God and of the principles laid down in His Word the Bible. This brings me to the most important reason that we must define marriage as the union – only – between one man and one woman, and that is because of God's Law. This is very critical. Because if one does not accept the law of God, then one does not believe in any kind of absolute authority, and believes that every one has a right to his own opinion, can make his own rules and can get away with it. - This of course would lead to anarchy,

perversion and corruption. If it is a matter of one's own opinion, or freedom of choice who's to say that murder, rape and stealing are wrong, as that is a matter of choice.

Please don't infringe upon my freedom would be the cry..

*Page 5*  
Our great nation was founded upon Judeo-Christian values, and these values are found in the Word of God, and we must not depart from these values.

Remember, first of all, that the Lord Jesus Christ, who created us and who owns us has the authority to tell us what is right and what is wrong.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

As the God-man he dealt directly with the subject of marriage in the New Testament =  
Matthew 19

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder

Jesus quoted directly, out of the book of Genesis in its account of the creation of Adam and Eve, who were the first man and woman and consisted of the first marriage in literal history. Therefore marriage can only be between a man and a woman and not between a man and a man or a woman and a woman.



Genesis is real history. Jesus explained the doctrine of marriage in the verse I just quoted.

. Jesus Christ is the creator of the world and of all its creatures. The Bible is the written word of God and our instructions book for life.

God performed the first marriage in Genesis 2: 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed

→ And according to the Word of God, one of the primary reasons for marriage is to produce a godly offspring. = Gen. 1: 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

We are to reproduce within the bonds of marriage. This involves one man and one woman. God made man and woman so they can come together and fit in the celebration of marriage. Two men do not fit, two women do not fit, therefore they can not reproduce. If we had only same sex marriages, soon there would not be a human race.

→ God has some serious things to tell us when we violate His word, and do what is right in our own eyes.

Romans 1

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

This is quite a list, and each of us has chosen to be guilty of many things described on the list. A loving God judges each of these sins. But there is good news. Through the gift and love of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, we can receive His forgiveness and thus change our way of living. "For God so love the World that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever, believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

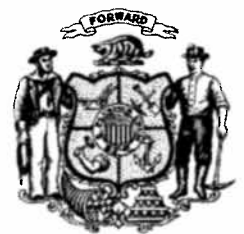
→ We must define marriage as between one man and one woman because of natural law, for the good of society and most of all because Biblical Law or because God says so.

People can change their lifestyle and live for God, and I am willing to sit with anyone, who is willing to listen in an orderly manner and I'll share with them the truth of the love and grace of God...

Please don't feel that I hate you because you have chosen to be different. Just because I disagree with you, does not mean that I hate you. In fact, because I disagree with you, and willing to offer you hope, help and joy, proves that I love you very much.

I speak in favor of AJR 67 & SJR 53

Committee, I pray regularly for you legislators and I thank you for this opportunity today to sit before you and that you have been willing to listen.





Hearing on Amendment to Ban Same Sex Marriage and other plans that are similar.

November 29, 2005

Kay Heggstad, M.D.

Family Practice

Chair of Wisconsin Medical Society CEJA (Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs)

Today I am speaking for myself and for Greg and Mark. My son, Greg, is not allowed to marry Mark, in spite of being in a committed relationship for 4 years. They have a home, property and a life together and may adopt a child someday, but they are not allowed to be married. *Polyamorous! They would need to deal w/ their issues!*

Since my son came out 11 years ago, I have met dozens of same sex couples in committed long term relationships. These couples, just like Greg and Mark, have taken on and will continue to take on all the responsibilities of marriage without enjoying any of the hundreds of legal rights and benefits. *(100) (160) according to Sen Fitzgerald* This is just unfair. They are married and are a family in every sense of the word except legally. Their marriage would take absolutely nothing away from , nor in any way hurt marriage for opposite sex couples.

Twelve years ago, I might have voted for such an amendment. But that was before I knew any people who were in long term same sex committed relationships. So now I know that this amendment would write discrimination into our constitution.

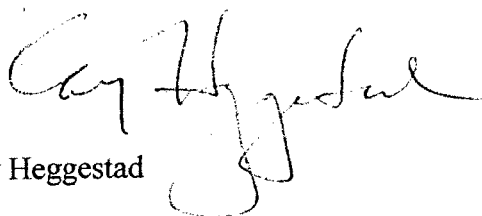
It goes too far by prohibiting any situation that is even similar to marriage such as domestic partnerships and civil unions.

This amendment would hurt real families by denying couples all sorts of rights (such as time off from work to care for an ill partner, bereavement rights, visitation rights in hospitals and dozens of others) including the right to use a partner's insurance benefits thru work such as legally married couples enjoy. This hurts the children in these relationships and many gay couples do have kids.

This amendment should be soundly defeated as being anti family, anti children and anti basic human rights.

~~Thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak.~~

*Had to  
leave before  
speaking.*

  
Kay Heggstad



TESTIMONY BY NASW WI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARC HERSTAND ON NOVEMBER  
29, 2005 BEFORE THE JOINT JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN OPPOSITION TO  
THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BANNING SAME SEX MARRIAGES AND CIVIL  
UNIONS

The National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter (NASW WI) strongly opposing the proposed constitutional amendment banning same sex marriages and civil unions.

NASW WI has a long history of providing support and resources to help individuals form and preserve healthy, stable relationships and families. Marriage is seen by all societies as an important foundation of stable families. This legislation attempts to forever exclude gay families from receiving those resources and support and thereby unnecessarily discriminates in a way that is harmful to an entire class of families. The latest census in Wisconsin identified over 8000 same sex households in the state.

This constitutional amendment would create more vulnerability for children who are being raised in gay households by making it impossible to have joint-parenting rights for gay couples. For one couple in Milwaukee, the denial of legal recognition threatened their child's health. When the couple's young daughter had an allergic reaction to a bee sting, school authorities would not allow one mother to take the child to the hospital unless she first had written permission from her partner-the legally recognized mother. This meant that the young girl could not go to the hospital until her mother first drove across town for a permission note. \* Instead of working to pass a constitutional amendment that has the potential of harming the security and well being of children raised by gay couples, legislators should instead be finding ways to help children in Wisconsin.

Civil marriage gives opposite-sex couples access to over 1,000 benefits under federal law and hundreds more under Wisconsin law. Same-sex couples do not have ready access to any of them, including the ability to receive Social Security survivor benefits, taking family leave to care for a sick partner, visiting a partner in a hospital, making medical decisions for a dying partner, inheriting a deceased partner's possessions or receiving health care coverage through your partner's health insurance. I would ask Wisconsin State Senators and Representatives to search your hearts and ask whether you really want to permanently deny all of these benefits to same sex couples who may have been together as long as 20,30, or even 40 years?

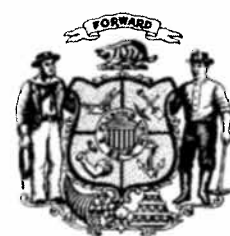
NASW WI believes that this constitutional amendment to ban same sex marriages and in all likelihood civil unions and domestic partnerships also contributes to an atmosphere of prejudice, discrimination and hatred towards Gay and Lesbian citizens. There is consistent evidence that Gay and Lesbian youth attempt suicide more often than heterosexual youth.\* Many youth and young adults live in fear of ridicule or physical attack by their peers or ostracization by their families if their sexual orientation becomes public. I am sure it is not the intention of the sponsors of this amendment to cause harm to Gay and Lesbian youth or adults. I am sure that the sponsors of this bill would support efforts to eliminate teen suicide, physical attacks against Gays and Lesbians and prejudice and discrimination in general against Gays and Lesbians. However despite the best of intentions by sponsors they need to understand the day to day reality of our Gay and Lesbian youth and adults and how this bill contributes to a feeling of isolation and depression among Gay and Lesbian youth and adults and in general a negative and punitive environment towards Gays and Lesbians.

NASW WI believes that all families, gay and heterosexual, deserve the protection of the law in matters such as inheritance, visitation, health care access and decision-making, and child custody, and therefore calls on legislators to reject this harmful constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships.

- [www.actionwisconsin.org](http://www.actionwisconsin.org)
- Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration. (1989a) *Report of the secretary's task force on youth suicide: Volume 2. Risk factors for youth suicide* (DHFS Publication No. ADM 89-1622). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



To the Supreme Judicial Court - the

11/20/05

My name is ZKowal. I am a transgender identified lesbian. I am here today to speak against this constitutional ban on civil unions and gay marriage.

This amendment has nothing to do with protecting the sanctity of marriage. It has everything to do with discrimination.

Do we really want to have our founding fathers turn over in their graves? This country was founded on the idea of freedom from persecution. In the Declaration of Independence it states that we are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Who has the right to judge that my pursuit of happiness is not valid? I want the same thing as everyone else. I want to have the same protection of the law. I want the same rights as everyone else. I want the person I love to have the right to make decisions regarding my well-being. I want that person to have rights to our children if something were to happen to me.

A power of attorney will not cover these things. My wishes will be denied because legally my partner has no rights.

My sexuality has nothing to do with my ability to raise children. I will raise my children in a household where love will be abundant and gender stereotypes will not be present. Just because my partner does not have sperm and ~~that~~ we cannot

... conceive naturally ~~state based members~~ it does not make having  
... children any less sacred. My children are  
... entitled to the same rights as all children.  
... ~~This commitment~~ I have already experienced  
... discrimination for not being a "married couple"  
... even though it was a committed monogamous  
... relationship. I was in the hospital overnight  
... for back surgery and one nurse came in  
... and because my partner and I weren't married  
... my partner could not spend the night (Insert Address)  
... The constitution is not meant to be a tool  
... for discrimination. Wisconsin was the first  
... state to have sexual orientation as a  
... protected class. Why should we go back on  
... our progressive roots? Why should we  
... openly and admittedly discriminate against  
... a group of people? I have the same blood,  
... organs, bones, cells, genes as each and  
... every person in this country. I am not a  
... second class citizen. I deserve the same  
... rights as each and every person in this  
... country and just because I am not  
... heterosexual this should not change. I  
... am against this commitment because  
... this country was founded ~~to~~ <sup>need to</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>to</sup>  
... uphold and ~~be~~ <sup>to</sup> that



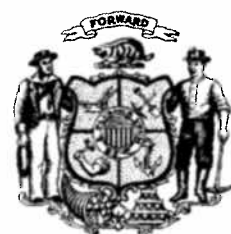
Addressum to the Senate Judiciary Committee:

11/29/05

In response to the subject of domestic violence, I have been in an abusive relationship. I have been demeaned emotionally, beaten time and time again. I was ~~threatened~~<sup>threatened</sup>. She stated "You don't know me well enough to trust me not to kill you in your sleep," while she held a butcher knife to my throat. I could not call anyone for help. My parents disapproved of the relationship and if I had called the police they would not have helped me. They would ~~not~~ have seen my complaints as invalid because we were not married. I deserve to not have to worry that the police will let me be brutalized and beaten to death by the woman I am dating. If we use this amendment to condone discrimination, no one will be safe.



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF WISCONSIN, INC.**

122 State Street, #405  
Madison, WI 53703-2500

Phone: (608) 256-0827  
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<http://www.lwwi.org>  
[lwwisconsin@lwwi.org](mailto:lwwisconsin@lwwi.org)

November 29, 2005

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy  
Assembly Committee on Judiciary  
Re: Opposition to AJR 67 and SJR 53

Based on our anti-discrimination policy, and our concern for equal rights for all citizens and all families in Wisconsin, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin opposes Assembly Joint Resolution 67 and Senate Joint Resolution 53, which would amend our state Constitution to provide that only marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state. The amendment would ban marriage for lesbian and gay couples, denying equal opportunity for that portion of our population. The amendment further states that "a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state". This could be interpreted to also ban domestic partnerships which currently are recognized by many employers in Wisconsin.

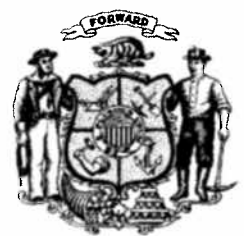
We strongly oppose the use of our State Constitution as a vehicle to discriminate against any group of Wisconsin citizens. There are same gender couples with children in every county of our state. These families deserve the same protections as heterosexual families. There are literally hundreds of protections for married couples and families which gay couples and their families do not enjoy. The proposed change in the Wisconsin Constitution would take away rights that now exist (such as domestic partnerships) and would prevent civil marriage for persons not able to benefit under current law. This law would hurt Wisconsin families.

The proposed amendment passed once in March 2004. It must be passed twice (in the same form) before going to voters in a referendum, possibly in November 2006. We hope Wisconsin voters would see the inequality and discrimination intrinsic in this amendment. Better yet, we hope this legislation is defeated before it goes to the voters.

We urge you to vote against this amendment. Thank you for this opportunity to respond.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



**GWEN MOORE**  
4TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

**COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES**  
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND  
CONSUMER CREDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL  
MONETARY POLICY, TRADE AND  
TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS



# Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4904  
(202) 225-4572  
FAX: (202) 225-8135

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
219 NORTH MILWAUKEE STREET  
SUITE 3A  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202-5818  
(414) 297-1140  
FAX: (414) 297-1088

[www.house.gov/gwenmoore](http://www.house.gov/gwenmoore)

November 29, 2005

Senator David A. Zien  
Room 15 South  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison 53707-7882

Representative Mark Gundrum  
Room 19 North  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8952  
Madison 53708

Dear Senator Zien, Representative Gundrum and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong opposition to the measure being considered today, a constitutional ban on same-sex marriages, and to urge the Committee to reject this proposal.

My former colleagues in the State Senate know very well Wisconsin's reputation for progressive values, for toleration of difference and celebration of diversity. Protection and defense of civil rights have long had a home in Wisconsin. We are the only state to have declared the Federal Fugitive Slave Law unconstitutional. Our state provided a refuge to the only known survivor of a lynching. More recently, our state established employment protections for LGBT people, ensuring that sexual orientation could not endanger our citizens' rights to earn a living and pursue a career.

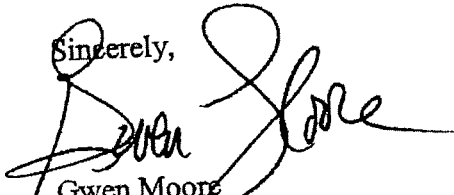
This constitutional amendment is wrong because it is, quite simply, discrimination. This constitutional amendment would prohibit two people of the same gender from accessing an array of basic rights that other citizens enjoy every day – rights that go along with having their relationships be recognized by the state. We are well aware that a constitution is a fundamental document. It is a statement of what we stand for as a state. It articulates the most basic rights and responsibilities enjoyed by our residents. It is a tragic mistake to enshrine discrimination in a document that exists to protect our most basic freedoms.

This amendment is not only morally offensive, it is destructive on a practical level. Because of language in the second sentence of the amendment, its passage will undoubtedly threaten other mechanisms for recognizing and conferring benefits on same-

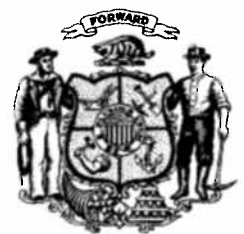
sex relationships. Local governments and corporations that offer benefits to civil unions and domestic partnerships might have to discontinue those benefits. In other states where similar constitutional amendments have passed, local governments and corporations have been subject to lengthy and expensive litigation to determine the validity of the benefits they have chosen to offer. Passing this amendment in Wisconsin will not only endanger real people and real families, it will also undermine our efforts to attract the best and brightest young minds to enhance our workforce and drive our economic development.

I urge you to stand up for justice today. I urge you to oppose discrimination. I urge you to remember what our state stands for, and oppose this pernicious and poisonous measure.

Sincerely,



Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress





## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

### Testimony on 2005 Assembly Joint Resolution 67

By Bishop Robert C. Morlino

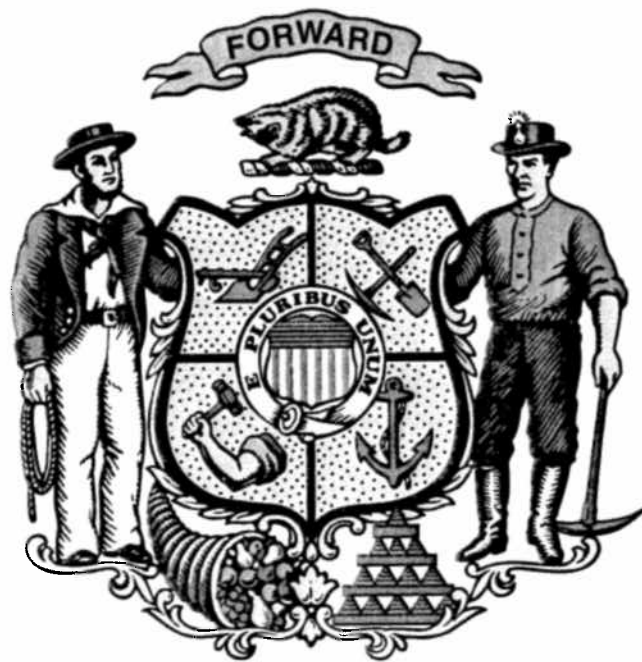
November 29, 2005

I am speaking on behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference and for myself as Bishop of the Diocese of Madison, for the Catholic Faithful of our diocese, which comprises 11 counties in south-central and southwestern Wisconsin.

- I. I am not here to ask that Judaeo-Christian teaching be given the force of law.
- II. The truth about the human person revealed by reason – called the natural law – can be known by reason alone with no religious faith involved, by every human person.
- III. The truth about the human person known by reason alone should be supported by the state and in some instances enacted into law.
- IV. The truth about marriage – one husband, one wife, one lifetime with openness to children – is inscribed in the human mind-heart which yearns for one-flesh union, and in the human body's procreative ecology.
- V. Virtually every society and civilization have looked to authentic marriage as the truly human context for love, as the best context to form and educate children, and as the best context for daughters and sons to care for elderly parents – i.e. to keep the role of the state in forming children or determining the fate of the elderly as secondary, if not minimal. Through authentic marriage, children and grandparents are enriched by one another and the family name is passed on. This complex durable bond of a one-flesh union is in the best interest of our society and democracy, and should be strongly promoted and protected by civil law.
- VI. Other concepts of marriage as easily dissolved by mutual consent and therefore temporary, leave custody decisions of children and determinations as to education of children to the civil courts, a vehicle of the state. These other concepts of marriage lived out are surely less generative. As the number of children in a given population decreases, the state will have ever greater interest in their future and perhaps the authority to control that future. Note: The Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has already ruled that parents have no fundamental right to educate their children. A society where the state would assume such level of control over children should not call itself a democracy.
- VII. For the sake of our common humanity, authentic marriage as one-flesh durable union, as institution and covenant, must be protected in the strongest terms by civil law. Our culture, with its many victims of the tragedy of divorce, has proven that love cannot sustain the institution of Marriage. But the long-standing history of foremothers and forefathers on our planet has proven powerfully that a strong institution of marriage can sustain love.

Thank you.





## Marriage: It Just Makes Sense

My name is Rex Munyon, a resident of Watertown, Wisconsin. I appreciate your willingness to hold this hearing and allow me to express my thoughts on this issue.

The bills before us today, AJR 67 and SJR 53, strengthen current Wisconsin law in regard to traditional heterosexual marriage. All references I will make to marriage in this statement refer to traditional heterosexual marriage. I would ask you to vote for this legislation because it just makes sense.

Marriage makes sense socially. Studies of children indicate that the best environment for a child is in a loving family with a mother and a father. "Children from married two-parent households do better academically, financially, emotionally, and behaviorally". (Quote from Getting it Straight, by Peter Brigg and Timothy Dailey) They have lower rates of arrest, illicit drug use, poverty, and school failure. I would assume that we all want what is best for our children, and marriage is best for our children.

Marriage makes sense economically. If children do better academically, financially, emotionally, and behaviorally as a part of a marriage, it only makes sense that there will be economic benefits to this state in supporting marriage. The children will be more productive, which means more industry and tax revenues for the state. The state won't have to spend money incarcerating these children.

Marriage makes sense Biblically. The constitution of the great state of Wisconsin affirms God in its preamble, and I quote: "*We the people of Wisconsin, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure its blessings, form a more perfect government, insure domestic tranquility and promote the general welfare, do establish this constitution*". If the founders of this state felt it was important to honor God in the constitution, it would be wise of us to look to what God says in regard to marriage. The Bible affirms marriage as between one man and one woman. **Genesis 2:24** refers to Adam and Eve and says "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." This was where marriage was established in the Bible. Jesus confirmed this in the New Testament in **Matthew 19:4** "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, **5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? **6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Marriage makes sense evolutionally. There are probably some here that don't believe the Bible and the account of Adam and Eve. They believe in evolution. I don't remember much of my evolution training in the public schools of Wisconsin, but I do remember two principles, 1) Survival of the fittest, and 2) Propagation of a species. If a species doesn't propagate, it won't survive. The only way the human race will survive is if men and women propagate. Every person in this room is the result of a man and a woman propagating. For the human race to continue, we should encourage the traditional relationship (marriage) that is best for propagation to continue. In an odd sense, I think that marriage is one area where the beliefs of evolution and creation would be in agreement.

Marriage makes sense politically. If none of these other reasons seem valid, look at the example of all other states that have brought such an amendment before their voters. In all cases, the voters have voted, sometimes as high as 4-1, in favor of such an amendment. You have been elected to represent the people of your respective districts, and I believe that a poll of your districts would indicate that the majority of the people of this state want this amendment. If you follow the desire of your constituents, you will vote to support this amendment.

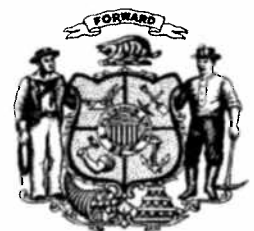
In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts, and I encourage you to pass this constitutional amendment because it just makes sense. If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them to the best of my ability.

Rex Munyon,  
209 N Church St  
Watertown WI 53094

Presented to the legislative hearing on November 29, 2005



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





November 29, 2005

TO: Members of Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees

FROM: Janie Ocejo, Outreach and Social Action Coordinator, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 608-255-0539

RE: Testimony in Opposition to SJR 53 and AJR 67

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in opposition to SJR 53/AJR 67. I am testifying on behalf of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV), a statewide social change organization representing local domestic violence programs, victims of domestic violence and their children, and individuals concerned with ending domestic violence.

There are numerous reasons to oppose this legislation; however, our testimony today will focus on the unintended negative consequences that may be posed by the overly broad language of the resolution. This proposed constitutional amendment defines marriage between one man and one woman as valid and recognized in Wisconsin. The proposal then goes on to deny legal status or recognition to any relationship that is "identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals." This second, very broad statement, which denies recognition to any unmarried individuals has the potential to negate over 20 years of legal protections, created to protect victims of domestic violence.

Wisconsin has offered domestic abuse restraining orders as legal protection for victims of domestic abuse since 1983. When victims file for a restraining order, the courts give legal recognition to specifically defined relationships, many of which fall outside of the definition of a "marriage between one man and one woman." Wisconsin statutes 813.12(1)(am) define "domestic relationships" as adult family members or adult household members, an adult caregiver of an adult who is under the caregiver's care, a spouse, an adult former spouse, an adult with whom the individual has or had a dating relationship, an adult with whom the person has a child in common. After Utah passed a similar constitutional amendment<sup>1</sup>, a man charged with violating a restraining order challenged the constitutionality of such protective orders for unmarried couples. His lawyer cited passage of the constitutional amendment as grounds for denying such legal protections to unmarried victims of domestic violence. It is our belief that Wisconsin victims will face similar legal challenges to the legitimacy of the protections afforded them currently by restraining orders should the current constitutional amendment pass.

Additionally, Wisconsin also includes similar legal protections to victims of domestic violence under Wis. Stats. 968.075 (mandatory arrest). Slightly more narrowly defined

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<sup>1</sup> Utah's constitutional amendment states: 1) Marriage consists only of the legal union between a man and a woman. 2) No other domestic status or union, however denominated, between persons is valid or recognized or may be authorized, sanctioned or given the same substantially equivalent legal effect as a marriage.

than restraining orders, Wis. Stats. 968.075 defines "domestic relationships" as a spouse or former spouse, an adult with whom the person resides or formerly resided or an adult with whom the person has a child in common. In Ohio, a Cuyahoga County judge reduced a felony domestic violence conviction to a misdemeanor assault when a domestic batterer challenged his conviction based upon the definition of legal marriage defined in Ohio's constitutional amendment<sup>2</sup>. The prosecutors of the case have appealed.

Some members of the legislature seek this constitutional amendment defining marriage because of concerns that same sex couples might seek to marry in Wisconsin. However, the unintended consequence of this resolution may potentially have a substantial impact on a large number of heterosexual couples in Wisconsin. Well over 20 years of political and social reforms have brought victims of domestic violence limited protections under the law. In 2003, there were over 20,000 arrests for domestic violence in Wisconsin. 8,634 incidents were reported to have occurred in Milwaukee County. Of the remaining 12,371 that occurred elsewhere in Wisconsin, only 4,239 (34%) occurred between spouses or former spouses.<sup>3</sup> The remaining 66% were individuals who were cohabiting, dating or had a child(ren) in common. These individual victims may no longer be afforded protection under Wisconsin's domestic violence law should this constitutional amendment pass.

On behalf of all victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin, we urge you to give serious consideration to the negative impact passage of SJR 53/AJR 67 may potentially have on some of Wisconsin's most vulnerable citizens. We urge you to oppose passage of this proposed constitutional amendment.

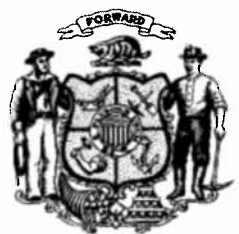
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<sup>2</sup> Ohio's constitutional amendment states: Only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this state and its political subdivisions. This state and its political subdivisions shall not create or recognize a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance or effect of marriage.

<sup>3</sup> Milwaukee County does not report relationship between victim and offender in their data reporting.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Paul T. O'Leary  
1134 E. Mifflin Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
608-256-3239  
ptoleary@chorus.net

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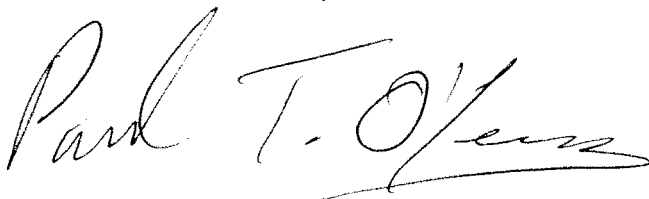
To: Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees  
Date: 29 November 2005  
Re: SJR 53, AJR 67

My wife and I are fourteen-year residents of the 78<sup>th</sup> Assembly District and the 26<sup>th</sup> Senate District. I'm here, as a married person, because I'm concerned about the institution of marriage. I'm here to defend my marriage, and the institution of marriage. And I'm here representing, albeit not officially, a large number of married couples and male-female committed couples I know. Like them, I contend that what "threatens" marriage is NOT inclusion of same-sex couples, but the exclusion and discrimination that the institution presently entails. And it will further harm marriage as an institution if that discrimination, that bigotry, is codified in our most hallowed and respected of guiding documents, our state Constitution.

I've been married for nine years. My wife and I have been together for 23 years. We were one another's first, and of course only, love. I don't need to be reminded of how many ex-wives I have (I have none). Why the fourteen-year disparity, you might wonder? Why did we wait so long? Because, like many married couples and committed opposite-sex couples I know, I was reluctant. Reluctant to be part of an institution that discriminates. In our case, the realities of inheritance, hospital visitation, medical insurance and the like ultimately prevailed. But it's a shame that those benefits, those blessings if you will, cannot prevail for ALL couples of otherwise unrelated consenting adults.

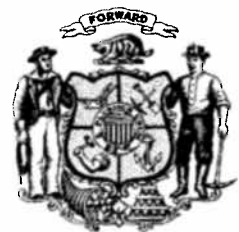
This amendment will harm the institution of marriage, because it constitutes (no pun intended) nothing more and nothing less than bigotry. Discrimination. I'm especially outraged that those who wish to further codify that discrimination claim to be "defending" marriage as an institution, and in some way representing my interests as a married person. Quite simply, you do not.

This amendment isn't about "keeping couples together"; divorce is already commonplace, and I can assure you that there are male-female couples who have NOT gotten married because it discriminates. It's not about children; couples like my wife and I, who are not having children, get married every day. The only remaining argument is some nebulous "protection" or "defense" of the institution of marriage. But that's a farce; I and countless other married couples who oppose this amendment prove that. And to those bigots pushing this amendment, that argument is also a fraud, in that they claim to be representing or defending married couples like my wife and me. Once again, quite simply, they do not. And they should be ashamed of themselves for pretending to do so.





# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





TO: THE JOINT JUDICIARY COMMITTEES:  
FROM: Rev. Richard E. Pritchard

11-29-05

Thank you for hearing us.

In speaking for the adoption of the proposed Constitutional Amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman, it is because I am concerned that government recognizes the unique value of the traditional family. Were you not to approve this proposed amendment, it would be saying that anything goes. Where could you draw the line? This is no more a discrimination against the gay community than the smoking ban is discrimination against smokers. Both present a major health problem. And the claim that "We are born that way" is nit born out by any credible scientific research. Simon LeVay, himself a homosexual, tried to prove it via twins, but his conclusions could not be replicated. It is generally agreed that his research was seriously flawed and designed to support a predetermined conclusion. It seems to be generally agreed among objective scientist that we are pretty well conditioned by environmental factors during our first three precognitive years or by seduction when confined in a same-sex facility.

We know that HIV/AIDS is pandemic all over the world. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that ca. 65% of known AIDS cases are due to "Men having sex with men". And from this source, ca. 35% - like second-hand smoke - comes from needles, drugs, transfusions, prostitution, promiscuity, and having contact with the body fluids of those with AIDS. *World Vision* reports that today 6,000 children will be orphaned by AIDS. Tomorrow, another 6,000 will be orphaned. And every day - 6,000 more children will be orphaned. Do smoking, cancer, or heart disease match that?

The battle to preserve marriage as between one man and one woman is a Gettysburg in a larger civil war between two cultures in America - that culture which puts its trust in a Higher Power, the "Divine Providence" of the Pilgrims and of our Founding Fathers and Mothers, who laid a firm foundation for the greatest nation this earth has ever seen, a nation that said to a hurting world: "*Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ...*" - and a counter culture that is trying to undermine what made our country so uniquely a haven for those who wanted to be free.. It says our God is a myth. It puts its trust in human reason as the highest power.

It was human reasoning that got Adam and Eve into a peck of trouble (Gen. 3:2-6); the Hebrews during the 300 year period of the Judges had problems because "*There was no king (higher power) in Israel. Every man did that which seemed right in his own eyes*" (21: 25); the sex-centered religions of the tribes around Israel were the product of human reasoning; the decadent religions of the Greeks and the Romans was a product of what seemed right in their own eyes; the Inquisition and the witch hunts were man's doing in the name of God what seemed right to them; it was this humanist trust in their own reason that gave rise to the holocausts in Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and communist China.

And what has happened in America over the past fifty years since the counter-culture of the secular humanist "religion" (kata Webster's Unabridged) has torn down the wall of traditional values and has put up a wall to prevent co-operation between Church and State? What has happened since the humanist religion has pushed prayer and the Bible out of our public schools, removed the Ten Commandments from the halls of government, and is trying to take Christ out of Christmas?

A whole lot!

Aside from the dishonesty of a few State legislators, an unprecedented number of adults are breaking their marriage vows because it seems right in their own eyes; more and more couples are just shacking up; unbelievably filthy movies and other "entertainment" are crowding the stage and screen; entrances to public schools have metal detectors; police roam the halls; there is a big increase in crime and violence in the public schools and on our streets; gangs are beginning to appear; drugs and pot are common; a recent newspaper article reported that teens in our public schools are confused about their sexual identity - this has happened since the School Board used our tax dollars to pay for a lesbian to teach our children that homosexuality and heterosexuality are equally normal and acceptable, and trans-gendering is ok; younger and younger children are becoming sexually active and getting pregnant; sexually transmitted diseases are pandemic; a startling, in-depth newspaper article last Saturday reported that the Princeton Review said the UW-Madison is the top partying school in the nation, the Harvard School of Public Health reported: "78% of (UW) system undergraduates drank alcohol in the previous month with more than 59% reporting binge drinking in the previous 14 days." At UW-Madison, the binge rate was the highest in the country - 66% compared to the national average for colleges of 44%.

(Incidentally, I am also troubled that these out of town students have such easy access to voting in our local elections and can carry so much influence by sheer weight of numbers)

I have gone to some lengths in detailing the wider scope of this culture war to emphasize the need to turn things around if our country is to remain great. The adoption of the proposed Constitutional Amendment to save the traditional marriage is a big step toward turning things around.

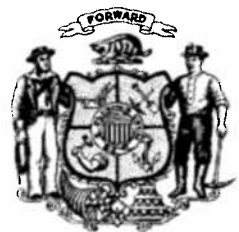
Sincerely, *Richard E. Pritchard*

Rev. Richard E. Pritchard, D.D.  
Pastor Emeritus, Heritage Congregational Church

333 W. Main St. - # 108  
Madison, Wis. 53703  
(608) 259-8099  
rpritch@sbcglobal.net



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





**TESTIMONY OF KELDA HELEN ROYS**  
*on behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin*  
**OPPOSING SJR 53/ AJR 67, CONSTITUTIONAL BAN ON CIVIL UNIONS & MARRIAGE**

**To:** Wisconsin State Senate & Assembly Judiciary Committees  
**From:** Kelda Helen Roys, Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin  
**Re:** Opposition to 2005 SJR 53/ AJR 67  
**Date:** November 29, 2005

Good morning. On behalf of our over 25,000 statewide members, I thank the committees for the opportunity to testify against the constitutional ban on civil unions and marriage.

**NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin believes in a culture of freedom and personal responsibility.** We believe that all families should have access to health care, equal legal protections, and privacy in their personal affairs. Those are not just pro-choice values, they are Wisconsin values. They are American values.

**We strongly oppose this proposed amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution.** It is unnecessary, it goes too far, and it hurts real Wisconsin families, especially children.

The proposed amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution does not just ban gay marriage, which is illegal in Wisconsin, but goes much further by eliminating any benefit substantially similar to marriage for all unmarried couples, straight or gay. This includes health insurance, family visitation rights, retirement benefits, and domestic violence intervention, and over a thousand legal protections for families.

As a health care advocacy organization, we are particularly concerned about the impact this amendment could have on the ability of families and children to access health care services. Currently, many private and public employers have determined that offering such benefits to employees and their families is critical to attracting good workers. It is not just same-sex couples that value equal benefits for domestic partners and spouses, but many fair-minded straight employees as well.

Many Wisconsinite would not work for a company that refused to provide equitable benefits for same-sex families. Among the top graduates of my law school class, this was a key factor in selecting among law firms. Wisconsin companies – and Fortune 500 companies– know that such benefits are necessary to retain their competitive edge and a talented workforce.

Unfortunately, this ban could take away the abilities of companies to be economically competitive – it could hamper the ability of corporations and municipalities to make business decisions that they feel are necessary. Passing this ban could deter workers and companies from coming to or staying in Wisconsin. More drastically, as in other states, it could eliminate health care coverage and other benefits from thousands of families statewide.

By prohibiting any benefits substantially similar to marriage, the amendment rolls the dice for thousands of Wisconsin workers and children who currently receive health care and other



# NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin

Kelda Helen Roys, JD  
Executive Director

protections. Same-sex families already struggle and must incur extra expense to ensure a minimum level of protection for their partners and children. This ban could eliminate their ability to create legal arrangements to protect their family from health care costs, death or illness, separation, and other life-changing events.

Similar bans in other states have resulted in dismissing domestic violence charges against abusers who aren't legally married to their victims, loss of health insurance, and elimination of employment benefits, among other adverse consequences.

Eliminating domestic partnership benefits for all unmarried couples and their families defies common sense. We should be working to reduce the number of uninsured and economically vulnerable in our state.

In ten years, this amendment will be even more widely seen for the unfair and destructive force it is. Already, Wisconsinites want families to have equal legal rights and responsibilities. Statewide polls show that sixty percent support civil unions or marriage for gay couples.

The Boards of Directors of NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin and Foundation understand how this assault on privacy and equality relates to those aimed at reproductive health care access. They unanimously passed resolutions opposing this ban:

*"Whereas the attempt to amend the Wisconsin Constitution to ban same-sex marriage and partnerships is a clear violation of the fundamental American right to privacy, and whereas NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin (Foundation) opposes this attempt to limit the right of individuals to make personal, private decisions without government interference or discrimination, and whereas the U.S. Constitution protects individuals' decisions about marriage, procreation, contraception and family relationships, be it resolved that the Board of NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin (Foundation) resolves to stand proudly side by side with our colleagues in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community to oppose this outrageous proposal."*

As a public lawmaking body, I ask you to work to improve protection for Wisconsin families, not dismantle it. Increase equality for children and workers – do not eliminate it. Foster economic development – do not suffocate it.

Wisconsin families deserve to be healthy and successful. Government will never enable that success by invading personal privacy, discriminating against some citizens and their children, and removing critical legal rights and responsibilities from certain groups. This legislature can, and should, help every family and our state: by fostering equality, economic opportunity, and affordable health care.

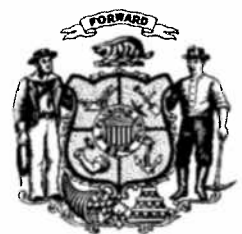
We respectfully urge the committees to oppose this attempt to amend the Wisconsin Constitution to ban civil unions and marriage. Thank you.

*Contact:* Kelda Helen Roys, [kelda@prochoicewisconsin.org](mailto:kelda@prochoicewisconsin.org), (608) 213-4502

NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin is the political arm of the pro-choice movement, building a culture of freedom and personal responsibility. Our political advocacy ensures women the full range of reproductive health care services, including preventing unintended pregnancies, bearing healthy children, and choosing safe, legal abortion.



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



11-29-05

Nikki Schlaishunt  
631 E. Hadley St #3  
Milwaukee, WI 53212  
(414) 372-6983

My name is Nikki Schlaishunt. ~~I am not a~~ I am not a  
~~Special interest group~~ Special interest group, I am a human being  
and a US \$ Wisconsin citizen. (over)

When I was a child, my mother worked in a day care center. She used to come home and talk about her kids there. Once my ~~brother~~ sister protested and said that we were her kids. My mother agreed, "You are my daughters" she said. And my kids. And the children at the center are my kids. All children are my children, and when you grow up, all children will be your children. What she meant is that it is the responsibility of adults to make sure we, as a society, take care of our children, that we do nothing that harms our children. This amendment will harm Wisconsin children. It will harm children from gay families and children from straight families as it HAS named children in other states who have passed similar amendments. This amendment will not stop straight couples from getting divorced. It will not stop straight couples from jumping into quickie marriages in Las Vegas. What this amendment will do is hurt children. And I believe it is our responsibility to make sure our children are not hurt. This amendment goes too far. This is why I am urging you to vote against this amendment. *Nikki Schlaishunt*





Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Today has been a very difficult personal exercise for me, listening to insult after personal insult from Senator Fitzgerald, other sponsors of this amendment, and the members of the public here today supporting it. For you, it's an abstract political exercise where you imagine you're defending an "institution." For me, it's a deep and most personal insult and threat to put my civil rights up to a public referendum.

As a lifelong Wisconsinite, growing up in Kewaskum, which is now part of Senator Grothman's district, in the tenth year of a relationship with my life partner, Brian Bigler, I am angry at this assault.

As a Roman Catholic, I ~~also~~ have the model of Jesus, who stood peaceful and mute when faced with Herod's false accusations. I also greatly admire those of you who can suffer the humiliation of testifying for your own obvious equal rights with a smile on your face, and I hope to learn this skill some day.

I am currently a co-convener of Integrity/Dignity-Madison. I/D is an interfaith group of GLBT Christians, families and friends.

Our local Integrity/Dignity chapter is affiliated with the national organizations Dignity, the nation's foremost organization of lesbian, gay, bi and transgender Catholics, as well as Integrity, which is the Episcopal Church's GLBT caucus. In the Madison area, we have met together regularly for worship, education, and mutual support, since 1977.

The Integrity/Dignity faith community has celebrated several same-gender unions over the years, each with far more preparation and care than I've noted in relatively routine heterosexual weddings, where the greatest attention seemed to be paid to the style of bridesmaids' dresses and the party afterward.

As you've heard, the spiritual unions which our Integrity/Dignity faith community has celebrated for nearly 30 years have not been recognized yet in civil law in Wisconsin.

I am Roman Catholic. I know Bishop Morlino and others from the Madison Catholic Diocese registered in favor of this Constitutional change and may have spoken. I assure you they do NOT

represent even a majority of Catholics. My Catholic parents, brother and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, do not support discrimination against Brian and me. To keep their jobs, the priests and nuns who have counseled Brian and me over the years must oppose this amendment covertly. The Catholic and Episcopal priests who administered the pre-marital tests to Brian and me prior to our Holy Union Ceremony July 26, 1995, do not support discrimination against our family.

Today we've heard many supporters of this amendment claim that the concept of marriage has remained unchanged throughout history. This is true neither in our lifetimes nor in millenia of recorded history. In his book, *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*, Dr. John Boswell thoroughly examines the development of heterosexual marriage from a property arrangement (where the husband acquires the wife and a dowery), to one of uniting family dynasties, to one based on love — where the husband's and especially the wife's emotions gain importance.

John Boswell also traces and contrasts a thousand-year history of rites of same-sex unions which survive in liturgical texts throughout Europe, with the mere five centuries of rites of heterosexual marriage. The beautiful language which we find in modern weddings show up in same-sex union rites centuries before they appear in heterosexual marriage rites. Ironically, one popular reading comes from Biblical expressions of love between Ruth and Naomi.

We know that in our own lifetimes, attitudes toward arranged marriages, doweries, interracial marriages, marriage ages especially for girls, divorce, annulment, and marital property, have continued to develop.

To summarize, families built around same-gender couples have existed for many years all over Wisconsin.

Despite what you'll hear from some religious officials, people of faith in Wisconsin DO support civil rights for same-gender couples — and have for centuries. Same-gender couples pose no threat to "marriage," which has evolved throughout human history.

Please stop this proposed Constitutional amendment, which solves no problem, but serves only to insult a minority of your fellow citizens, tonight.