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A Letter from America's Religious Leaders in Defense of Marriage

Throughout America, the institution of marriage is suffering. As leaders in our nation's religious communities, we cannot sit idly by. It is our duty to speak. And so across the lines of theological division, we have united to affirm, in one voice, the following:

For millennia our societies have recognized the union of a man and a woman in the bond of marriage. Cross-culturally virtually every known human society understands marriage as a union of male and female. As such marriage is a universal, natural, covenantal union of a man and a woman intended for personal love, support and fulfillment, and the bearing and rearing of children. Sanctioned by and ordained of God, marriage both precedes and sustains civil society.

Marriage is particularly important for the rearing of children as they flourish best under the long term care and nurture of their father and mother. For this and other reasons, when marriage is entered into and gotten out of lightly, when it is no longer the boundary of sexual activity, or when it is allowed to be radically redefined, a host of personal and civic ills can be expected to follow. Such a point has always been stressed by the world's great monotheistic religious traditions and is, today, increasingly confirmed by impeccable social science research.

Long concerned with rates of divorce, out-of-wedlock births, and absentee fathers, we have recently watched with extreme alarm the growing trend of some courts to make marriage something it is not: an elastic concept able to accommodate almost any individual preference. This does not so much modify or even weaken marriage as abolish it. The danger this betokens for family life and a general condition of social justice and ordered liberty is hard to overestimate.

Therefore, we take the unprecedented stand of uniting to call for a constitutional amendment to establish a uniform national definition of marriage as the exclusive union of one man and one woman. We are convinced that this is the only measure that will adequately protect marriage from those who would circumvent the legislative process and force a redefinition of it on the whole of our society. We encourage all citizens of good will across the country to step forward boldly and exercise their right to

work through our constitutionally established democratic procedures to amend the Constitution to include a national definition of marriage. We hereby announce our support for S.J. Res.1, the Marriage Protection Amendment.

May God bless all marriages and all those who labor to protect the sanctity and promote the goodness of marriage throughout this nation.

Signed,

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