



Dear Minnesota lawmakers:

Marriage is the lifelong, faithful union of one man and one woman, and the natural basis of the family.

Marriage is a fundamental social institution because it provides a mother and father within a stable, loving environment for children. Marriage is also beneficial for adults as the ideal structure for men and women to live interdependently, recognizing the equal dignity and value of one another. This is the natural order, embracing the complementary physical, emotional, and spiritual design of men and women.

Therefore, the promotion and protection of marriage is a matter of the common good. It serves the wellbeing of the man and woman, of children, of civil society, and all people.

As religious leaders of Minnesota, we find the continued affirmation of marriage between a man and a woman essential. The attempt to alter the definition of marriage in civil law is dangerous. It degrades the cultural understanding of marriage to an emotional bond between any two adults, and creates a profound interference with the exercise of religious freedom for people and institutions whose faith and doctrine recognize the spiritual foundation of marriage exclusively as a union between a man and a woman.

Some claim that as long as religious ministers are not forced to preside over same-sex “marriages” the principle of religious freedom, as secured in the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment, is protected. However, the notion that the exercise of religious freedom is confined to the interior of a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque, or to the property that a religious community may own, is wrong and dangerous. Religious freedom also extends to the ministries of religious organizations and to the conscience of the individual. Thus, the real peril: if marriage is redefined in civil law, religious individuals and other organizations—regardless of the foundational tenants of their faith—will be required to consider same-sex unions as the equivalent of marriage in their lives, ministries, and operations. An imposition of this nature is a violation of conscience and of religious liberty.

We call on all people of good will to preserve marriage and religious freedom. The far-reaching consequences of redefining marriage in civil law extend throughout our Minnesota communities and will directly impact religious freedom. Marriage and religious freedom are integral to the prosperity of our state, and our elected leaders should do all they can to maintain these important values.

Sincerely,

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Masjid Shafici Cultural Center

Reverend Dan Carlson
Executive Minister, Minnesota Iowa Baptist Conference

Rabbi Moshe Feller
Director, Chabad Lubavitch, Upper Midwest Merkos

Reverend Sergio Aranda
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Reverend Don Fondow
President, MN North District, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Crookston

Most Reverend John F. Kinney

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Most Reverend John M. Quinn

Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Winona

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Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Duluth

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