



Court Decision on Gay Unions Demands Marriage-Protection Amendment

JEFFERSON CITY — A recent decision by the New Jersey Supreme Court underscores the need for federal protections for traditional marriage. New Jersey’s highest court ruled that same-sex couples are entitled to the same rights as traditional married couples. In spite of the court’s ruling that same-sex couples do not have the right to wed under the state constitution, this misguided decision makes clear that the United States needs a federal marriage amendment to protect traditional American values.

On Oct. 25, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that denying financial benefits and other privileges to same-sex couples violates the state constitution’s guarantee of equal protection for all residents. The court also ruled that this does not mean same-sex couples have the right to marry, and it ruled that it is now up to the state Legislature to determine how marriage rights are applied to gay couples.

In essence, this means that gay couples have the right to marry, so long as they don’t call it “marriage.” But we are not fooled.

This ruling poses a threat to the beliefs and values that define who we are as Americans. It is an affront to the traditional rite of marriage — the declaration before God that a man and woman will live faithfully as husband and wife.

However, this threat is not toothless; it is not merely symbolic. The court ruled that there is no fundamental right to gay marriage. At the same time, however, justices equated homosexual unions with traditional marriages, rendering the sacred institution meaningless. This is a reckless decision that is energizing the American majority, which supports the values upon which our nation was founded.

Since the court announced its decision, Americans have been calling on Congress to support a marriage-protection amendment, which it failed to do earlier this summer. Meanwhile, eight states have marriage-protection proposals on their November ballots, and those frustrated with the decision are sure to make their opinions known on election day. In 2004, 11 states approved constitutional amendments banning gay marriage — with an average of 70 percent of the vote. It is clear that the New Jersey court is not in touch with the values of the American people.

Although this decision represents an egregious threat to traditional family values, Americans are making their voices heard. We recognize that the United States needs federal protections for traditional marriage, and we are calling on Congress to pass a resolution for ratification by the states. Marriage is a sacred institution that is necessary for maintaining a healthy society based on traditional values, and it must be defended.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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