



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MARRIAGE

NOM

CALIFORNIA

The Goal:

Raising \$2 million to put the California Marriage Amendment on the November 2008 ballot.

Background. In 2000, almost 60 percent of Californians approved Proposition 22, which defined marriage as the union of husband and wife. Same-sex couples have filed suit challenging the constitutionality of Prop. 22 and the California Supreme Court will rule probably by the summer of 2008. The California Supreme Court is one of the most favorable courts in the country on gay issues, and in this case the California Attorney General Jerry Brown is not trying very hard to defend the law. (In his court papers, he actually repudiated the winning argument in New York, Maryland, and Washington, that one of the state's key interests in marriage is responsible procreation.) The California Marriage Amendment puts Proposition 22 in the state constitution, where the courts (and the legislature) may not overturn it.

A total of 790,000 valid signatures (or about 1.1 million raw signatures) must be collected by April 20 to get on the November ballot.

Why marriage?

Marriage is our most fundamental institution for protecting children; it's the way we teach young men and women they need to come together to make and raise the next generation. If we let the courts redefine marriage, our government and tax dollars will be used to teach the next generation this cross-cultural historic understanding of marriage is only based on irrational hatred and bigotry. Our government will teach our children that our faith's understanding of marriage is discriminatory.

What does the Holy Father say about what's at stake in the marriage debate?

"The very basis of co-existence and the future of society," Pope Benedict XVI said during the traditional New Year's greeting on January 10th.

That's the second time *this month* the Holy Father has found some new reason to highlight the importance of marriage. He used January 1, World Peace Day to talk about the need to protect marriage once again: "The natural family, founded on the marriage of a man and a woman" is "the first and indispensable teacher of peace" and anything that obscures this truth about man "threatens the very foundations of peace." And that's just in the last two weeks! Could the Holy Father be any clearer that he wants us to stand up for marriage?

How does gay marriage threaten our religious liberties and Catholic (and other faiths') institutions?

Gay marriage is not about letting Adam and Steve do what they want in private. It's about getting the government to endorse and promote the idea that orientation is just like race: "there's no difference between same-sex and opposite-sex couples and anyone who says otherwise is a bigot, like those who opposed interracial marriage.

How do we treat racists in the public square? Well, we don't throw them in jail but government does penalize them in a variety of ways. Racists are not allowed:

- Radio broadcasting licenses;
- Professional licenses (teachers, lawyers, social workers, physicians, psychologists, marriage counselors);
- To run accredited schools; or
- Tax-exempt charity status.

There's no more important battle. Because if courts adopt the idea that Catholic views of marriage are just irrational bigotry, like racism, all our Catholic institutions—schools, universities, charities—are going to face powerful new government pressures to silence us and marginalize our faith.

This is not some alarmist future. Anthony Picarello, general counsel for the USCCB, confirms "The impact [of same-sex marriage] will be severe and persuasive." Already in Massachusetts, the government has shut down a Catholic adoption agency because refusing to place children with gay married couples is unlawful "discrimination." In New Jersey, a Methodist group lost part of its state real estate tax exemption because they refuse to let civil union ceremonies be performed on church property.

Why now?

If we wait, the next chance will be 2010, and we give away two key assets: the backlash and the status quo. Backlash and anger fades. More importantly, one of the reasons marriage amendments have won 27 out of 28 states is that they only ask voters to affirm the status quo. If we wait until 2010 we will be asking voters to take away an established right—much, much more challenging.

What can you do?

We need at least \$1.5 million and ideally \$2 million to get this on the ballot. We've raised over one million dollars in the first 3 weeks of January. NOM California is working with Bishop Cordileone; we've promised the bishop that 100 percent of donations will be used for the paid signature gathering drive—we will pay for all our overhead from our national donor base.

Time is of the essence because the price of paid signature gathering goes up the closer we get to the deadline. Right now it's \$1.75 a signature. In a month that will rise to \$2 or \$3 (because of competition from other initiatives).

Write checks to: NOM California, 4698 Alvarado Canyon Road, Suite K, San Diego, CA 92120.

To request petitions for signature gathering, visit: www.nationformarriage.org/california/petition