

DFL Leaders Continue to Act as Chief Obstructionists in the Minnesota Marriage Amendment

St. Paul, Minnesota (April 6, 2005) – Minnesota Citizens in Defense of Marriage (MCDM) today presented evidence that they believe points to a concerted effort on the part of DFL leaders to mislead and deceive the public on the merits of the Marriage Amendment bill. MCDM contended that numerous DFL legislators, apparently acting under the direction of party leaders, have systematically executed a campaign of misinformation. “The evidence is pretty clear,” said Jeff Davis, President of Minnesota Citizens in Defense of Marriage. “We have collected a variety of correspondence between DFL legislators and their constituents, all apparently pointing to a concerted effort on the part of DFL leaders to mislead the public on the facts surrounding the Marriage Amendment bill.” At a press conference held at the State Capitol, Davis presented sample documents that he believes provides the evidence. The documents illustrated that many DFL legislators are telling their constituents the same points, using almost identical language. The major themes include:

- Minnesota does not need the marriage amendment,
- There are more important issues to be addressed by the legislature,
- The marriage amendment will deny certain rights to homosexuals, and
- The marriage amendment is simply a political ploy being used by Republicans.

Davis responded by stating these points were blatantly false and presented facts to counter each of the DFL arguments. “I don’t know how some DFL legislators can make these assertions in good conscience,” said Davis. “They are all aware of the facts. We now have 7 states in which activist judges have overturned existing marriage laws – 4 in the last 18 months. Court cases challenging marriage laws have been filed in over half of the states in our country. With yesterday’s vote in Kansas, we now have a total of 18 states that have responded by amending their state constitutions. And up to 17 additional states are working on constitutional amendment bills this legislative session.”

Senator Don Betzold (DFL – Fridley), chairman of the Senate Judiciary committee, claims there’s no hurry to hear the Marriage Amendment bill, since the earliest it could go on the ballot is during the 2006 general election. “It doesn’t matter whether I hear the bill this year or next year,” said Betzold. Davis pointed out that Betzold has recently submitted a reincarnation of his “fake” Marriage Amendment bill from last session as an alternative to the House bill that was recently past with bi-partisan support. Davis explained that the proposed Betzold bill fails to define marriage and does not put the amendment question on the ballot until 2008. “It is truly unbelievable that Senator Betzold would continue to employ these tactics in light of recent poll results that demonstrate a supermajority of Minnesotans want to vote on an amendment to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Minnesotans must demand that DFL leaders to stop playing politics with the future of Minnesota families.

Sample DFL letters and other supporting documents can be found on MCDM’s website at www.mnmarriage.org/press.htm.

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DFL Legislator Claims	The Truth
<p>We already have a Defense of Marriage of Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Minnesota today has one of the toughest laws against same-sex marriage in the United States, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).” Senator Dean Johnson, DFL – Willmar • “In 1997, legislators passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to make same-sex marriages illegal in Minnesota.” Senator Satveer Chaudary, DFL – New Brighton • “We don’t need to put this on the ballot. We have a law already on the books...” Senator Steve Murphy, DFL -- Red Wing 	<p>A constitutional amendment offers the only real protection for marriage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courts have now overruled marriage laws in 7 states -- California, Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont, Massachusetts, Washington and New York – 4 in the last 18 months! • Washington State has a DOMA law that was struck down in two separate court cases in 2004. This is the same law that DFL legislators claim will protect marriage in Minnesota. • 12 of the 13 states that passed Defense of Marriage Amendments last year already had DOMA laws on their books. This confirms that a Constitutional Amendment is the only real protection for marriage.
<p>The MN Supreme Court has established legal precedence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Minnesota also has a Supreme Court decision in 1970 upholding that marriage is only between a man and a woman. The case of Jack Baker and Michael McConnell sets a precedent for Minnesota courts.” Senator Leroy Stumpf, DFL – Thief River Falls • “The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled on same-sex marriage more than 30 years ago.” Senator Dean Johnson, DFL – Willmar 	<p>Baker v. Nelson is no longer relevant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case of <i>Baker v. Nelson</i> is 34-years-old. • Courts have a track record of overturning previous rulings, as evidenced by the U. S. Supreme Court’s 2003 ruling in <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i>, which overturned the Court’s previous 1986 ruling on sodomy. • Last August, a Washington State federal judge issued a decision in the case of <i>Kandu v. Kandu</i> in which the judge determined that <i>Baker v. Nelson</i> no longer provides binding precedence, given more recent Supreme Court cases such as <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i>.
<p>Homosexuals will be denied access to existing benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This ban on legal equivalents is written so broadly that it puts hundreds of Minnesota businesses at risk of being sued for providing certain employment benefits to gay people.” Rep. Nora Slawik, DFL – Oakdale • “The people of Minnesota have a right to know that you would take away basic benefits from us.” Rep. Karen Clark, DFL- Minneapolis 	<p>The amendment does not deny anyone access to benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed amendment would not prohibit any employer from providing domestic partnership benefits. • The amendment simply precludes establishing a relationship that is identical to marriage and calling it something else (e.g., marriage by another name).

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<p>There are more important issues to be addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This is a year we ought to deal with the budget, transportation funding, funding of our public schools, energy issues, public safety issues, the bonding bill." Senator Dean Johnson, DFL - Willmar • "We do not believe that this amendment is a priority for most voters in the state. We believe that this is an attempt to divert attention from the real issues facing our core Minnesota values..." Senator Tom Saxhaug & Rep. Loren Solberg, DFL - Grand Rapids 	<p>The Marriage Amendment is a priority for most Minnesotans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No single other issue in the 2004 session generated more constituent telephone calls, letters, emails, and personal visits than the Marriage Amendment bill. • A recent Mason-Dixon poll shows that 65% of Minnesotans oppose legalizing same-sex marriage, 63% support allowing the people of Minnesota to decide whether our state constitution should be amended to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman, 61% of voters would vote in favor of the amendment and 49% of voters would be less likely to reelect their state senators if they oppose the amendment bill. • A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll released last week shows that 68% of Americans are opposed to legalizing same-sex marriages.
<p>The Marriage Amendment is being pushed for political purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The push for a gay marriage amendment is part of 'the politics of distraction.'" Dean Johnson, DFL - Willmar • "It's just an issue that the conservatives have decided to use nationally to rally the troops for the Presidential election." Senator Dean Johnson 	<p>DFL leaders are playing politics with the future of Minnesota families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are very legitimate concerns for the Marriage Amendment - marriage laws have now been challenged in over half of the United States. A total of 18 states have now amended their constitutions, 3 additional states have passed bills thus far this year and 17 more have bills currently in the legislature. • The Marriage Amendment bill has bi-partisan support amongst Minnesota voters, as evidenced by the strong polling results. • DFL Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson has stated that efforts to pass the Marriage Amendment bill will prompt efforts by the DFL party to push for passage of constitutional amendments related to universal health care, transportation or gambling. • DFL Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Don Betzold has once again introduced a "fake" marriage amendment bill SF 1958 that <u>does nothing to define marriage</u> and <u>won't put the measure to a vote until 2008</u> (after the State Senate elections in 2006). • It is DFL leaders who are playing politics with the Marriage Amendment bill and the future of Minnesota families.