

# VoteYesMarriage.com

## California Marriage Amendment



### The Voters' Right to Protect Marriage Initiative

#### **Protecting civil marriage for a man and a woman isn't about protecting the Church, but about protecting the family, children, and the culture**

Some defenders of marriage claim that legalization of civil homosexual "marriages" will force clergy to bless same-sex "marriages" and hire homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual staffers. This is simply not true, and seems to be a scare tactic to make people desperate to support an ineffectual civil marriage amendment. Protecting civil marriage isn't about protecting the Church, but about protecting the family, children, and the culture.

In the last three years, every single right and benefit of civil marriage in California law has already gone to homosexual couples. This systematic ripping apart the uniqueness of civil marriage, and the homosexual "rights" agenda in general, is the real persecutor of religious freedom, not the hijacking of the word "marriage." The word "marriage" is only the cherry on the cake and the cake has already been hijacked. Thus, only banning homosexual "marriage" licenses in California through the very weak "Protect Marriage" amendment would still allow churches to be threatened by counterfeit marriages and other laws promoting the homosexual, bisexual, and transsexual agenda.

#### **The nightmare scenario of Christian ministers being forced to bless homosexual "marriages" or no marriages at all is absurd**

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees basic religious freedom for churches. Unless our country's basic legal structure is done away with, and the First Amendment completely annihilated, Christian ministers will not be forced to baptize, bless marriages, or provide other religious services at the behest of the government. The experience of Massachusetts – which began licensing "same-sex marriages" in 2004 – demonstrates that ministers have not been forced to conduct these "marriages" to retain their religious positions, duties, and rights. This is in accord with the constitutional rules preserving choice for every minister in every state in our nation. Consider that in California today, marriage is only for a man and a woman, but

pastors and priests do not have to bless marriages or relationships they disapprove of. You choose whether or not to marry a couple, and that's not going to change.

If somehow religious freedom laws were radically abolished to remove choice from ministers who bless marriages, pastors and priests would simply give up their roles as state-approved officiates of civil marriages. Like it's done in other countries, ministers would choose to marry only who they wished to marry, and would conduct religious not civil ceremonies. Under this scenario, the only difference from today's weddings would be that the bride and groom receive their signed marriage license from the county government prior to a church ceremony.

Therefore, the religious freedom argument claiming that homosexual "marriages" will force Christian ministers to bless homosexual "marriages" or no marriages at all is absurd. The First Amendment clearly protects religious freedom and the courts have determined that this freedom exists virtually unencumbered within church buildings, church campuses, and church activities. The current option of clergy to marry or not marry anyone they wish exists today and will not change even in a homosexual "marriage" environment. To claim otherwise is to engage in hyperbole.

#### **Prevention of same-sex "marriages" will not stop the attacks on religious freedom**

Virtually every attack against religious freedom and moral conscience in California has already come from homosexual agenda laws (starting in 1992) and laws awarding homosexual couples the same rights of marriage (starting in 2001). Legal and legislative battles over whether churches can "discriminate" while using state funds, whether private entities can "discriminate" in hiring or relationships with clients or customers, and whether churches can "discriminate" in non-pastoral jobs, insurance benefits, etc., have been here and will continue to be here whether or not there are homosexual civil "marriages." These battles are about homosexual, bisexual, and transsexual "equality," not about so-called marriage "equality." In the face of these ongoing attacks, churches can best protect themselves by having a statement of faith that includes clear standards of behavior, and by being politically involved in order to preserve or restore good government.