

# Prosperity Through Timeless Values

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## THE PROBLEM WITH GAY MARRIAGE

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Next week, I will be going to Canada to do a briefing for their Members of Parliament about why cohabitation is not the same as marriage. I mention that to indicate that my primary job is to straighten out the straight people. And believe me, it is a full-time job. I am here today to explain why I believe instituting same sex marriage will make that job immeasurably more difficult. The needs of same sex couples and opposite sex couples would both be better served by having distinct institutional arrangements, rather than by trying to have one institution serve the needs of both groups.

Opposite sex couples have children, without any specific intervention by the state. Same sex couples can not have children without specific legal institutions in place to do two things: first, the rights of at least one of the genetic parents must be terminated. Second, at least one member of the same sex couple must have parental rights specifically assigned to them.

The advocates of same sex marriage hope that “marriage” will allow them to skip these steps. They hope for instance, that any child born to either member of a lesbian couple will be presumed to be the child of both. But that requires that somehow, the male contributor to the conception of the child must be safely out of the way. That step still has to be taken, no matter what kind of union the members of the lesbian couple have with each

other. Renaming their relationship should not be enough to invalidate the father’s rights to his child.

In practice, there are two possible things that can happen with the opposite sex parent. Either that parent will and will be considered legally superfluous. Or, the child can have three parents, the two same sex parents, plus the cooperating opposite sex parent.

Neither of these options are particularly good for children. We know that children thrive when they are raised by two married parents. We know that children suffer specific kinds of losses from the absence of their mother or from the absence of their father. And we know that children in step-families have a specific set of emotional and behavioral risks. We can only imagine how those problems would be compounded in the event of three, rather than two, legal parents juggling the children from one home to another, disputing about custody schedules and fighting over child support.

These are some of the negative outcomes we can expect from trying to make marriage into a gender-neutral institution that applies identically to same sex and opposite sex couples.

1. Triple parenting will emerge, as it has already done in both Canada and Pennsylvania.
2. The state will have to determine, not just record, parentage of same sex couples. If same sex marriage is really treated as the equivalent of opposite sex marriage, that authority will be extended to cover opposite sex couples as well.
3. There will no longer be “natural parents,” only “legal parents.” In Spain, the birth certificates were

changed from “mother” and “father” to “Progenitor A” and “Progenitor B.” In Canada, the birth certificates were changed from “natural mother” and “natural father” to “legal parent A” and “legal parent B.”

4. Same sex marriage will further the process of marginalizing men from the family. If children don't really need one parent of each gender, the natural conclusion will be that fathers, not mothers, are disposable.

Legally recognizing same sex marriage will destabilize the legal determination of parentage. In cases in both Canada, which has legal same sex marriage, and Pennsylvania, which does not, courts have recognized three adults as legal parents. In the Pennsylvania case, *Jacob v. Schulz-Jacob*, the two members of the estranged lesbian couple as well as the biological father, all dispute one another's rights and responsibilities. The children have all the trauma of divorce, multiplied. They have visitation with three adults, none of whom live together, none of whom are cooperating with each other. It is a psychologist's nightmare.

We have all seen children of divorced parents shuttling from one household to another. If same sex marriage comes to California, we will be seeing children going among three or even more parents. I urge you to vote against this resolution. Picture a little girl, going from her mom's house to her mom's former partner's house, to her dad's, to her dad's former partner's. Those little children, with their backpacks and their sleeping bags, will be on your head, if the resolution supporting same sex marriage passes.

I speak on behalf of the many supporters of traditional marriage who are arrayed in this room. We come from all the major faith traditions, and no religion at all. But we are united in two core beliefs.

1. We believe that men and women are different in socially significant ways. We believe that mothers and fathers are not perfectly interchange-

able. The advocates of same sex marriage must insist that gender is irrelevant to parenting.

2. We believe that something is owed to the child. We believe that every child is entitled to be born into a family of the mother and father who brought them into being through an act of love. Every child is entitled to a relationship with both parents.

Like many others here today, I am devoted to helping opposite sex couples see the importance of life-long married love. Our efforts would be greatly hampered by a judgement of the state saying adults are entitled to cut off a child's relationship with one of his parents at birth, and that the child should be indifferent as to whether he has both parents or not.

That is why we have come here today: to speak on behalf of those children yet to be born, to affirm our commitment to the principle that every child deserves a mother and a father.