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## **NEWS** *Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **FPCWV: WV Legislature Fails to Provide Legitimate Reason *Not* to Let West Virginians Vote**

*Year-long study ends with no recommendation on Marriage Protection Amendment*

**CHARLESTON, W.V.** — After a year of studying whether or not the Legislature should allow West Virginians to vote on the definition of marriage, members of the [Joint Committee on the Judiciary](#) have failed to advance a reason against letting the people of West Virginia vote on the definition of marriage. The state group that has led efforts to give West Virginians the opportunity to vote on the definition of marriage says legislative inaction leaves West Virginia's marriages vulnerable to redefinition.

“Starting the 2010 Legislative Session with no answer to a year-long study on this basic question of democracy is inexcusable,” says Jeremy Dys, president of the FPCWV. “West Virginia’s lawmakers must answer one simple question during this legislative session: ‘Does the democratic process apply to all West Virginians or just those in elected office?’”

The study resolution ([HCR 88](#)) in question was sponsored by 50 Democrats and 20 Republicans in the House of Delegates and passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Yet, even though lawmakers on Subcommittee A of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary heard significant [testimony](#) from both sides of the debate at a standing-room-only hearing in July, it has chosen to make no recommendations to the 2010 legislative session. That, Dys says, ignores the thousands of West Virginians who want to vote on the definition of marriage.

“Representative democracy means listening to your constituents when they ask to govern themselves. Are our lawmakers listening?” says Dys. “Ironically, the very process used to put our lawmakers in office is being denied to the same voters when it comes to the definition of marriage. The longer our legislature waits to let the people vote, the more vulnerable our marriages become and the more difficult it becomes to restore the voter’s confidence in their leaders.”

While over 50 million Americans have voted in favor of marriage as one man and one woman, just a handful of West Virginia lawmakers continue to be reluctant to let 1.8 million West Virginians exercise self-governance. [Polling](#) suggests more than 80% of West Virginians are in favor of such a vote. West Virginia is [in the minority](#) of states with no legally binding definition of marriage.

*The Family Policy Council of West Virginia is a servant organization that advocates for policies that embrace the sanctity of human life, enrich marriage, and safeguard religious freedom.*