



THE FAMILY
POLICY COUNCIL
OF WEST VIRGINIA

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NEWS Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New poll shows 78% of registered Democrat voters support marriage as one man, one woman

Statewide survey confirms bipartisan support for marriage protection amendment

CHARLESTON, W.Va., — A poll commissioned by the Family Policy Council of West Virginia last month, which surveyed 10,000 homes statewide, revealed that 78 percent of registered Democrat voters agree that marriage should be defined as one man and one woman. The poll results were released Tuesday.

When asked whether lawmakers should allow a judge to redefine marriage or invalidate West Virginia's Defense of Marriage Act, 84 percent of registered Democrat voters said that voters, not judges, should define marriage.

“Democrat voters in West Virginia want to vote to preserve marriage as one man and one woman. Our legislators should respect every West Virginian's right to vote on this issue,” said Jeremy Dys, president and general counsel of the FPCWV. “The results of this poll leave registered Democrat voters wondering, ‘Does the democratic process apply to all West Virginians, or just those running for office?’”

The poll also addressed one of the concerns typically raised by the majority of lawmakers--that placing a marriage protection amendment on any ballot would cost Democrats seats in the state legislature. But the poll revealed that more than 65 percent of registered Democrat voters would vote to re-elect sponsors of such a measure. Whether on a special or general election ballot, 75 percent of registered Democrat voters would vote to define marriage as one man and one woman.

“It's ironic that the very process used to put lawmakers in office is now being denied to voters when it comes to the definition of marriage,” said Dys. “By its silence, the legislature is holding the West Virginia Constitution hostage from the very people to whom it belongs.”

During this year's legislative session, the FPCWV has been urging lawmakers to pass a resolution allowing voters to settle the legal definition of marriage, as 30 other states have

already done. If passed, the resolution would provide for a special election where voters would be asked to affirm the definition of marriage. The FPCWV's proposal is just 19 words in length: "Only a union between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as marriage in West Virginia."

Del. Barbara Evans Fleischauer (D-Monongalia) recently convened the Committee on Constitutional Revision for the first time since 2003. During the meeting, Fleischauer, who retains complete discretion over the committee's agenda, allowed committee members to vote on a proposed constitutional amendment regarding taxes but has refused to place the marriage protection amendment on the agenda.

The marriage protection amendment has been the subject of several party caucus meetings in both houses and of both parties. Members of both the House and Senate were expected to be provided a recommendation on the marriage protection amendment at the outset of the 2010 legislative session. However, the joint subcommittee chaired by Sen. Herb Snyder (D-Jefferson) and Del. Bonnie Brown (D-Kanawha) that studied the issue for over a year made no recommendation.

"There is no legitimate reason not to allow the people of West Virginia to debate and vote on this issue," concluded Dys. "Representative democracy means listening to your constituents when they ask to govern themselves."

Full poll results are available on the FPCWV's project website, www.wv4marriage.com.

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.

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