

## OPINIONS

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# Kevin West: Voters should choose whether to allow same-sex marriage

February 11, 2009 @ 08:45 PM

The Herald-Dispatch

Often in national statistics, West Virginia is at the top of the list in areas we aren't proud of and the bottom of the list where we want to be at the top. A great attribute of the people of West Virginia that doesn't get mentioned often, but is quite evident, is our strong conviction and love for this nation and the principles on which it was founded.

In saying that, a recent poll released by the Family Policy Council of West Virginia reflects that 73 percent of West Virginians who are registered to vote would vote for a ballot initiative that defines marriage by saying, "Only a union of one man and one woman shall be valued or recognized in this state."

As many are probably aware, the threat to redefine the traditional institution of marriage in West Virginia is real. It is very common knowledge that there has been high-profile litigation in states such as California and Connecticut.

I am encouraged about an initiative by pastors and churches from all over the state along with the Family Policy Council of West Virginia that would allow the voters of West Virginia to define marriage rather than place that responsibility on the judges.

Although West Virginia has many wonderful judges, it has been demonstrated in other areas of the country that this could lead to many legal challenges and major distractions in the state and take away from the focus of the issues that most West Virginians want addressed in the courts.

Many careless and insensitive remarks have been made over the years about this subject. These remarks also have caused damaging offenses and crippling bitterness for many people. It is for that reason I struggle to write about the preservation of the marriage covenant between one man and one woman.

Although I disagree with the same-sex "marriage" agenda, neither do I affirm the antagonistic approach that brings condemnation through self-righteousness.

I believe God's love is unconditional regardless of the choices we make, even if the choices are not what I consider ideal. However, accepting God's love requires us to first understand God's love from His perspective and, secondly, allowing the necessary changes to occur that bring true righteousness, joy and peace in our lives that only God can bring.

My decision to support the preservation of the marriage covenant between one man and one

woman is based on the beauty and effectiveness of the institution prescribed by God through the mandate to man to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth and for a husband to love his wife as Christ loves the church.

While the aforementioned study reflects that most West Virginian voters support marriage between one man and one woman, I believe it is necessary for the West Virginia Legislature to take the necessary steps to allow the opinions of their constituents be made known. As this initiative progresses, I encourage all voters to become informed by visiting [www.wvformarriage.com](http://www.wvformarriage.com).

*Kevin West in the executive pastor of Christ Temple Church in Huntington, which has a congregation of approximately 2,500.*

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