

Dallas Erickson Testimony  
House Judiciary Committee  
HB 259 Civil Unions  
January 17, 2005

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HB 259

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dallas Erickson and I am a lobbyist for and represent the 4000 supporters of Montana Citizens for Decency through Law. We oppose this bill and feel it's introduction is a slap in the face of the great majority of Montana Citizens that voted for the Montana Marriage Amendment and that statistics show are also against civil unions.

Considering the philosophy of the past millennia the notion that marriage is primarily about love is a relative newcomer. It's only been the last century or so that the notion of romantic love within a marriage has been held in such high esteem. When romantic love became the basis of modern marriage, society sowed the seeds of the divorce culture. If marriage is just about love, once you "fall" out of love there is no reason to stay married. Studies on the "in love" experience have shown that the life span of romantic obsession is two years. When the obsession fades and the realities of everyday life set in, it can be a rude awakening to couples who anticipated that marital bliss would last forever.

The real meaning of marriage has been lost to most of us. Marriage was never just about romantic Hollywood-style love and Hollywood deserves much of the credit for the obscuring of the true purpose of marriage in civilizations.

Marriage has a far more fundamental and influential role than simply a public or legal documentation of "love." We love many people that we don't marry. If feelings of love or affection were all that mattered, fathers would be able to marry their own daughters, brothers could marry sisters, and people could even marry their dogs. If marriage were based solely on one's affections, the need for companionship, the desire for genital stimulation or a wish for increased benefits, the possible arrangements would be endless. The redefinition of marriage would reduce it to a commitment between *any* two individuals or entities and there are many relationships in society that would meet the new criteria.

Loving, committed relationships standing alone are of no interest to government.....no interest unless they produce a tangible benefit—children. Simply stated, government entered into the "marriage business" because of children. A stable marriage between a man and a woman is the only relationship that has the biological potential to produce children and *then provide the best and most successful environment in which to rear the next generation*. Successful societies have always understood this. Heterosexual marriage and childbearing is a government and societal imperative.

Marriage is not an issue of love, rights, or sexual preference. It is an issue of which activities and unions provide societies with a net benefit and which do not. There is no societal benefit to homosexual unions which are based primarily on genital stimulation and the perception of love.

Every man and woman who marries *can* give any child they create or adopt a mother and a father. Homosexual couples *can never* create nor provide a child with both a mother and a father.

I have often heard homosexuals rationalize gay marriages with the question, "We love each other so why should we not be allowed to marry?" With that rationalization anyone who loves anyone else or anything else should be allowed to marry. This is a new idea for the Earth crafted in the last few decades.

You may be wondering why I am speaking about marriage. Now let's get one thing straight right now, those who sponsor and support this bill are not fooling anyone. You want gay marriage but you are precluded from that by a vote of the great majority of Montanans that still realize what marriage is and have not been influenced by Hollywood or the media as they spout the gay agenda and ignore the other side of the message. This bill is about marriage and all it's rights. You desire to fool us by calling it civil unions.

This bill needs to be opposed by this committee for the same reason 67% of Montanans opposed gay marriages. Because that is really what it is.

Please vote to table this bill and be true to your constituents and to the foundation of traditional marriage.

Thank you.

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