

March 16, 2012

**Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia**

SUBMISSION: MARRIAGE EQUALITY AMENDMENT BILL 2010.

I am very much opposed to the push to give same-sex relationships the same status as marriage.

1. The case for Marriage between a Man and a Woman

Years ago when I was studying anthropology I came upon a definition of marriage which said, "Marriage is an institution whereby society recognises the children born from that relationship as legitimate."

Today we do not use the terms "legitimate" or "illegitimate" and in fact "defacto" relationships are recognised by society and by government as marriages and children born to defacto relationships are considered as "legitimate."

The thing that has not changed is that marriage still involves a man and a woman and any children that they might have so the old definition of marriage is still valid.

It is the potential to produce children that makes the marriage relationship between a man and a woman so special and sets marriage apart from all other relationships.

Same-sex couples cannot biologically produce children. It is therefore a nonsense to try to extend the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples.

My wife, Edith, have been married for 41 years. To us marriage is a very special relationship that not only encompasses Edith and me but also the bond that we have with our children.

We feel that to call a same-sex relationship “marriage” would devalue the uniqueness of marriage.

The movement to legalize same-sex marriage is an attack upon marriage, for redefining marriage to allow same-sex couples to marry will dramatically change the institution of marriage through the transformative power of inclusion.

It will weaken and lower expectations of marriage by accepting/including gay-lesbian lifestyles as marriage; and it will undermine the principle that children deserve to have both a mother and a father.

2. Children Need a Father and a Mother

The following article “Love isn’t enough” in “MercatorNet” on 2 June 2009 by Dr Trayce L. Hansen Ph.D. a licensed psychologist with a clinical and forensic practice in California states this case better than I can.

Proponents of same-sex marriage believe the only thing children really need is love. Based on that supposition, they conclude it’s just as good for children to be raised by loving parents of the same sex, as it is to be raised by loving parents of the opposite sex. Unfortunately, that basic assumption—and all that flows from it—is false. Because love isn’t enough!

All else being equal, children do best when raised by a married mother and father. It’s within this environment that children are most likely to be exposed to the emotional and psychological experiences they need in order to thrive.

Men and women bring diversity to parenting; each makes unique contributions to the rearing of children that can’t be replicated by the other. Mothers and fathers simply are not interchangeable. Two women can both be good mothers, but neither can be a good father.

So here are five reasons why it’s in the best interest of children to be raised by both a mother and a father:

First, mother-love and father-love—though equally important—are qualitatively different and produce distinct parent-child attachments. Specifically, it’s the combination of the unconditional-leaning love of a mother and the conditional-leaning love of a father that’s essential to a child’s development. Either of these forms of love without the other can be problematic. Because what a child needs is the complementary balance the two types of parental love and attachment provide.

Only heterosexual parents offer children the opportunity to develop relationships with a parent of the same, as well as the opposite sex.

Relationships with both sexes early in life make it easier for a child to relate to both sexes later in life. For a girl, that means she'll better understand and appropriately interact with the world of men and be more comfortable in the world of women. And for a boy, the converse will hold true. Having a relationship with "the other"—an opposite sexed parent—also increases the likelihood that a child will be more empathetic and less narcissistic.

Secondly, children progress through predictable and necessary developmental stages. Some stages require more from a mother, while others require more from a father. For example, during infancy, babies of both sexes tend to do better in the care of their mother. Mothers are more attuned to the subtle needs of their infants and thus are more appropriately responsive. However, at some point, if a young boy is to become a competent man, he must detach from his mother and instead identify with his father. A fatherless boy doesn't have a man with whom to identify and is more likely to have trouble forming a healthy masculine identity.

A father teaches a boy how to properly channel his aggressive and sexual drives. A mother can't show a son how to control his impulses because she's not a man and doesn't have the same urges as one. A father also commands a form of respect from a boy that a mother doesn't—a respect more likely to keep the boy in line. And those are the two primary reasons why boys without fathers are more likely to become delinquent and end up incarcerated.

Father-need is also built into the psyche of girls. There are times in a girl's life when only a father will do. For instance, a father offers a daughter a safe, non-sexual place to experience her first male-female relationship and have her femininity affirmed. When a girl doesn't have a father to fill that role she's more likely to become promiscuous in a misguided attempt to satisfy her inborn hunger for male attention and validation.

Overall, fathers play a restraining role in the lives of their children. They restrain sons from acting out antisocially, and daughters from acting out sexually. When there's no father to perform this function, dire consequences often result both for the fatherless children and for the society in which these children act out their losses.

Third, boys and girls need an opposite-sexed parent to help them moderate their own gender-linked inclinations. As example, boys generally embrace reason over emotion, rules over relationships, risk-taking over caution, and standards over compassion, while girls generally embrace the reverse. An opposite-sexed parent helps a child keep his or her own natural proclivities in check by teaching—verbally and nonverbally—the worth of the opposing tendencies. That teaching not only facilitates moderation, but it also expands the child's world—helping the child see beyond his or her own limited vantage point.

Fourth, same-sex marriage will increase sexual confusion and sexual experimentation by young people. The implicit and explicit message of same-sex marriage is that all choices are equally acceptable and desirable. So, even children from traditional homes—influenced by the all-sexual-options-are-equal message—will grow up thinking it doesn't matter whom one relates to sexually or marries. Holding such a belief will lead some—if not many—impressionable young people to consider sexual and marital arrangements they never would have contemplated previously. And children from homosexual families, who are already more likely to experiment sexually, would do so to an even greater extent, because not only was non-traditional sexuality role-modelled by their parents, it was also approved by their society.

There is no question that human sexuality is pliant. Think of ancient Greece or Rome—among many other early civilizations—where male homosexuality and bisexuality were nearly ubiquitous. This was not so because most of those men were born with a “gay gene,” rather it was because homosexuality was condoned by those societies. That which a society sanctions, it gets more of.

And fifth, if society permits same-sex marriage, it also will have to allow other types of marriage. The legal logic is simple: If prohibiting same-sex marriage is discriminatory, then disallowing polygamous marriage, polyandrous marriage, or any other marital grouping will also be deemed discriminatory. The emotional and psychological ramifications of these assorted arrangements on the developing psyches and sexuality of children would be disastrous. And what happens to the children of these alternative marriages if the union dissolves and each parent then “remarries”? Those children could end up with four fathers, or two fathers and four mothers, or, you fill in the blank.

Certainly homosexual couples can be just as loving as heterosexual couples, but children require more than love. They need the distinctive qualities and the complementary natures of a male and female parent.

The accumulated wisdom of over 5,000 years has concluded that the ideal marital and parental configuration is composed of one man and one woman. Arrogantly disregarding such time-tested wisdom, and using children as guinea pigs in a radical experiment, is risky at best, and cataclysmic at worst.

Same-sex marriage definitely isn't in the best interest of children. And although we empathize with those homosexuals who long to be married and parent children, we mustn't allow our compassion for them to trump our compassion for children. In a contest between the desires of some homosexuals and the needs of all children, we can't allow the children to lose.

3. Spurious Arguments used by Advocates for Same-Sex Marriage

The argument is that “If a heterosexual couple in a “loving relationship” is allowed to get married then a loving same-sex couple should be given this same right.”

But being in a “loving relationship” (while desirable) does not feature in the definition of marriage. I am in a “loving relationship” with my daughter but there is no suggestion that this constitutes a marriage.

Others argue that “if two people are in a “committed relationship” they should be able to be married. I am in a “committed relationship” with my employer. I am committed to work well for him and he is committed to paying me a proper wage. While commitment is a necessary ingredient of marriage, there is much more to a marriage than commitment.

Arguments that homosexual partners would miss out on inheriting a deceased partner’s estate or their superannuation or their insurance pay out or be unable to take care of a sick partner unless they were legally married are equally spurious. The matter of inheritance or being the beneficiary of an estate can easily be taken care of by the making of a will. The matter of caring for a sick partner can be addressed by the making of an Enduring Power of Attorney. Defacto heterosexual couples have had to address these issues and have been able to do so.

The main argument, and by far the most emotive one, is that same-sex couples are being discriminated against by not allowing them to get married. Again this is a specious argument because those who push the case for same-sex marriage want to change the rules. Marriage is available to anyone who meets the requirements of the Marriage Act, i.e. the couple must be a man and a woman.

As a male I could claim that I am being discriminated against because I cannot experience “motherhood”. The dictionary definition of a “mother” is “a female parent”. But if we were to change the definition of “mother” to be more inclusive to be “a parent of either sex” then I could enjoy the status of “motherhood”. I realize that this argument is ridiculous but it follows the same logic as that of those who want to change the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples.

4. Who is interested in Same-Sex Marriages?

A motion from Greens MP Adam Bandt -- in November 2010 required local members to gauge opinion in their electorates on the question of same-sex marriage, with the findings discussed in parliament in August 2011. The results showed opinion in Coalition and Labor seats was overwhelmingly against legalising same-sex marriage, with only six out of 30 MPs indicating their electorates were in favour of change.

An article in "The Australian" on 23 November 2011 by Dennis Shanahan and Tess Livingstone reported:

MOST voters consider new laws to allow same-sex marriage a low priority and would prefer to delay any changes on the issue.

This is the finding of a new survey and comes as the ALP faces ructions at its national conference next week and Julia Gillard's leadership risks damage over the issue.

While most support proposals for same-sex marriage, voters consider it a low-order issue -- only one-third as important as health services and cost-of-living pressures and half as important as the carbon tax, the survey has found.

Barrister and Ambrose Centre chairman Rocco Mimmo said the survey also found that 59 per cent of people believed society should not rush into same-sex marriage without knowing the social impact, especially on children.

"When asked if marriage between a man and a woman and them having children was an important social institution and if we should uphold the traditional meaning of marriage, 69 per cent agreed," he said. Seventy-three per cent of those surveyed also said that as a society, we should try to ensure children were raised by their natural father and mother.

"GetUp" bills itself as "an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation" and claims to have a membership of 597,000. "GetUp" has been one of the strongest advocates for same-sex marriage. However in their own survey of members same-sex marriage did not rate a mention in the "Top Ten Campaign Issues for 2012."

"We asked GetUp members like you what to campaign on in 2012 and tens of thousands spoke up." The "GetUp" survey listed the following issues: 1. Investment in renewable energy, 2. Protecting Australia's native forests, 3. Stopping harmful CSG mining, 4. Fair treatment of refugees, 5. Protecting the Murray Darling Basin, 6. Constitutional recognition of indigenous people, 7. Ending corporate donations and reducing the influence of lobbyists, 8. Humane treatment of factory farmed animals, 9. Safe and legal access to abortion, and 10. Poker machine reform.

One would have thought that, with all the media hype about same-sex marriage and with GetUp actively championing this cause, this issue should have made the top ten.

Advocates for the homosexual lobby have claimed that gays and lesbians make up to 10% of the Australian population. However the 2003 'Sex in Australia' survey of 20,000 people, Conducted by the *Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society* (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University. Published

in Australian & NZ Journal of Public Health, Vol 27 No 2 2003 ISSN 1326 0200. found that only 1.2% of adults identify as homosexual or lesbian. 1.6% of adult men identified as homosexual and 0.8% of women as lesbian.

SUMMARY

1. Traditional marriage between a man and a woman is a very special relationship because it not only involves the man and the woman but also the children that might be born as a result of that relationship.
2. Same-sex couples cannot biologically produce children therefore their relationships cannot be regarded as the same as marriage.
3. Excluding same-sex couples from “marriage” is not discrimination because they just do not meet the criteria for marriage.
4. Same-sex marriage definitely isn't in the best interest of children. In a contest between the desires of some homosexuals and the needs of all children, we can't allow the children to lose.
5. While the homosexual lobby is very vocal only 1.2% of Australian adults identify as gay or lesbian. Most voters consider same-sex marriage to be a low priority and a distraction from addressing more important issues.

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