



THE FAMILY
POLICY COUNCIL
OF WEST VIRGINIA

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NEWS Release

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Poll: West Virginians want to define marriage themselves, are worried courts will redefine it

New poll commissioned by the Family Policy Council of West Virginia finds 73% of West Virginians favor constitutional amendment, 80% reject a court's attempt to redefine marriage

CHARLESTON, W.V. – The Family Policy Council of West Virginia has released the findings of a new poll it commissioned on the issue of marriage in West Virginia. The poll reveals significant support among West Virginia voters for a state constitutional amendment defining marriage.

“West Virginians want to define marriage for themselves,” said Jeremy Dys, the FPC’s president and general counsel. “They do not want their government to set a policy – and they especially do not want a court to impose a system – that knowingly deprives children of a mom or a dad. The results of this poll demonstrate that now is the time for a marriage amendment in West Virginia.”

The poll, commissioned by the FPC and performed in late July by Advantage, Inc., found that 73% of the more than 500 registered West Virginia voters surveyed say they would support an amendment worded, “Only the union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized in this state.”

The findings of the poll, available at www.familypolicywv.com, suggests that an additional 73% of West Virginia voters would be “more likely” to vote for a candidate who favored an amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

However, the strongest opinions were reserved for activist courts. 80% of West Virginia voters said “no” when asked whether a court should be able to make same-sex “marriage” legal in West Virginia.

Dys met personally with Gov. Joe Manchin to ask for his support for an amendment, but Manchin declined, citing concerns about “timing.” In a letter to Dys dated Oct. 14, Manchin reinforced his position by stating that a constitutional amendment is unnecessary at this time because of West Virginia’s current marriage law.

“Connecticut, California, and Massachusetts prove conclusively that such a law insufficiently protects

marriage. Those states had laws, too, and they were simply thrown out by the courts,” said Dys. “The only law that prevents West Virginia from recognizing same-sex ‘marriage’ is one that is nearly identical to the law the California Supreme Court struck down in May. State statutes are not enough to protect marriage from activist court rulings.”

Dys expressed concern about the possible influence of former software executive and billionaire Tim Gill. Gill, now a homosexual political activist, together with his associates have given more than \$500,000 in just four years to the Democratic Governors Association, the political action committee chaired by Manchin.

“Someone needs to ask Governor Manchin, ‘Does your relationship with Tim Gill and the Democratic Governor’s Association influence your decision to keep West Virginians from having a say on marriage?’” said Dys. “There’s no reason not to let the people decide. The argument that ‘we already have a law’ doesn’t hold up.”

At the request of Dys, the Alliance Defense Fund, which has actively defended marriage amendments around the country, presented a legal memo to the governor last week. The memo, available at www.familypolicywv.com, cites a recent study out of UCLA that estimates that more than 68,000 same-sex couples have vacationed to California or Massachusetts to get “married.”

“It’s just a matter of time before the ones from West Virginia demand that this state recognize their relationship,” Dys explained.

Dys suggested that Manchin place this issue on the agenda during the November 2008 special session of the legislature. Should the legislature pass the measure, it would then go on a special election ballot in 2009 for a decision by West Virginia voters. If the voters approved the measure, marriage “between one man and one woman” would be the only constitutional definition of marriage in West Virginia.

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