

Dear Maryland Legislator,

I wish to first let you know how grateful I am for all the work you do on behalf of the state of Maryland.

Secondly, I wish to express to you an issue of great concern as you prepare for the 2012 legislative session. As one of your constituents, a pastor of **[Name of Church and Number of Congregants]**, and a community leader, I am concerned about the direction our state is headed in terms of its considering a redefinition of marriage.

In the news, I have heard that our own governor, Martin O'Malley has agreed to sponsor a same-sex marriage bill in the upcoming session. This distresses me deeply. It is the duty of those in leadership to defend and uphold that which protects and promotes the fundamental good of society. To redefine marriage is to undermine the foundational building block of every thriving civilization.

Marriage is unique. Unlike other unions or relationships, it is capable of procreation. Through marriage new life is conceived and the mother and father are permanently tied to one another and to their children. When a child is raised in a home where both a mother and father are present, he is healthier, more stable, and better able to contribute to society. Research has confirmed this again and again.

Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable. Every child has the right to a mother and a father and a right to share in the gifts that a mother and father bring to family and a home. Mothers and fathers play differently with their children and their roles in their child's life are complementary to one another.

Unfortunately, we have the sad reality of many broken homes in our society. As a pastor, I see numerous families affected by divorce and many children being raised in single-parent homes. The broken families that I have witnessed have shown to me the great importance of strengthening, not lessening the ideal of marriage as one man and one woman.

Marriage deserves our undivided attention as pastors, legislators, and community leaders. We all want a healthy and more stable society. We all want to protect and promote the common good. If we allow marriage to be redefined to include same-sex relationships then we intentionally deprive children of the right to a mother and a father.

I urge you to stand up for the rights of children and for the truth and fundamental dignity of marriage as between one man and one woman.

Sincerely,

Pastor **[Name]**