



Conservatives Against Amending the Constitution to Ban Civil Marriage for Same-Sex Couples

Current and Former Elected Officials and Political Leaders

“I don’t think the Constitution was ever written and set up for those kinds of amendments. I think those kinds of issues are better left to the states.”¹

—*U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE)*

“I think the fact of the matter, of course, is that matter is regulated by the states. I think different states are likely to come to different conclusions and that’s appropriate. I don’t think there should necessarily be a federal policy in this area”²

—*Vice President Dick Cheney*

“Now, we’ve already passed a federal law, the DOMA Act, Defense of Marriage Act, to do that, I think it has to be tested in the courts. When it’s tested in the courts, that will be the law of the land. However, if it’s not, then we’ll have to go to a constitutional amendment.”³

—*U.S. Representative and Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL)*

“But a federal amendment to define marriage would do nothing to strengthen families—just the opposite. And it would unnecessarily undermine one of the core principles I have always believed the GOP stood for: federalism. What’s more, it is surely not the tradition in this country to try to amend the Constitution in ways that constrict liberty. All of our amendments have been designed to expand the sphere of freedom, with one notorious exception: prohibition. We all know how that absurd federal power grab turned out. As our country has gained honest and steady knowledge about homosexuality, we have learned that it is not a mental illness or a disease or a threat to our families. The real threats to family values are divorce, out-of-wedlock births and infidelity.”⁴

—*Former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY)*

“I hold the Constitution in highest regard and I don’t like to see it trifled with. I’m a firm believer in federalism. Even though I’m not an advocate for same-sex marriage, I want the states to decide the issue. A constitutional amendment is both unnecessary and needlessly intrusive and punitive.”⁵

—*Former U.S. Representative Bob Barr (R-GA), Lead Sponsor of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)*

¹ Kelley, M. (2001, July 13). Amendment approached cautiously clergy group seeks gay-marriage ban. *Omaha World Herald*. p. 1.

² The 2000 Lieberman–Cheney Vice Presidential Debate: October 5, 2000. *Commission on Presidential Debates*. Retrieved December 4, 2003, from <http://www.debates.org/pages/trans2000d.html>

³ Transcript: Dennis Hastert on 'FOX News Sunday.' (2003, November 23). *FOX News Network, LLC*. Retrieved December 11, 2003, from <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,103935,00.html>

⁴ Simpson, A. (2003, September 5). Missing the point on gays. *The Washington Post*. p. A21.

⁵ Barr, B. (2003, August 21). Leave marriage to the states. *The Washington Post*. p. A23.



“Constitutional amendments are not good places to make bumper sticker statements.”⁶

—*Greg McNeilly, Executive Director, Michigan Republican Party*

Conservative Columnists

“Amending the Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman would be unwise for two reasons. Constitutionalizing social policy is generally a misuse of fundamental law. And it would be especially imprudent to end state responsibility for marriage law at a moment when we require evidence of the sort that can be generated by allowing the states to be laboratories of social policy.”⁷

—*George Will, Syndicated Columnist*

“...Every human being in the United States has the chance to move from the path of contingency to the path of marital fidelity—except homosexuals. Gays and lesbians are banned from marriage and forbidden to enter into this powerful and ennobling institution.... You would think that faced with this marriage crisis, we conservatives would do everything in our power to move as many people as possible from the path of contingency to the path of fidelity. But instead, many argue that gays must be banished from matrimony because gay marriage would weaken all marriage.... The conservative course is not to banish gay people from making such commitments. It is to expect that they make such commitments. We shouldn't just allow gay marriage. We should insist on gay marriage. We should regard it as scandalous that two people could claim to love each other and not want to sanctify their love with marriage and fidelity.”⁸

—*David Brooks, Syndicated Columnist*

⁶ Gay marriage an unnecessary distraction for senate: Pursuing a divisive constitutional amendment will hamper lawmakers in addressing the real problems of Michigan. (2003, October 6). *The Detroit News*.

⁷ Will, G. (2003, November 30). The decline of marriage. *Chicago Sun-Times*. p. 39.

⁸ Brooks, D. (2003, November 22). The power of marriage. *The New York Times*.