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Good afternoon, Chairman MacDonald, Chairman Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Dr. Thomas Finn. I live in Southington where I have been in practice as a licensed psychologist for 20 years. I am opposed to these bills seeking to redefine marriage.

My comments today are in the context of science and when discussing research and statistics, it is easy to focus on numbers and lose sight that, ultimately, we are talking about the lives of individual persons, all whom share a common dignity and value that deserves respect and it is with respect that my comments are offered.

Bill number 7395 states that the General Assembly has found that the best interests of children are served when persons show these children care, love, concern and support. The last 50 years of social science knowledge has taught us, however, that if such persons do not include a child's mother and father, then that child is at greater risk for physical, emotional, behavioral and social problems. With the number of children raised without both mother and father present increasing, greater numbers of children have lost the opportunity to absorb the benefits received from the unique capacities that both a mother and father bring to child rearing. Children thrive when they learn lessons of life from both their mothers and fathers and decades of research and practice testify to the benefits that the marriage of man and woman has offered to their sons and daughters. Although some children can thrive even if not reared by both mother and father, our goal must remain the standard of marriage which has proven most stable and most nurturing for children who are our society's future.

This Assembly has been bombarded with statements to the effect that scientists and professional organizations have proven, based on thorough research, that motherlessness or fatherlessness does not place children at risk. This is simply not true. These published studies have been unable to answer questions regarding risk to children because, as a group, they are biased with design flaws so significant that their authors include a paragraph in their own published work saying that they cannot make a scientifically valid, generalized conclusion about their findings. When you are told that these studies find "no differences" between children being raised by same-gender parents when compared to those raised by "heterosexual parents," you are not told that this usually means the former were compared to children living with single mothers, not those living with both mother and father. You are also not told that the small number of children actually studied makes statistically significant differences impossible to detect. In the research world, this is called "insufficient power" which creates a situation similar to looking at a forest of evergreens from far away. At a distance, our eyes aren't strong enough to see differences between trees, but look through powerful binoculars and the difference between trees is obvious. So far, the only valid conclusions that can be drawn from research presented in support of the re-definition of marriage is that scientific standards can be willingly lowered in the interest of a socio-political agenda and that we do not yet know all of the broad effects of same-sex parenting on a child's physical, emotional and social development. In contrast, decades of other well-designed research studies with sufficient power have consistently showed that the best interests of children, and of society, are served when mothers and fathers rear children together.

In closing, I again ask you to oppose these bills which further erode the institution of marriage. Each time a child's right to be nurtured and raised by his or her mother and father has been devalued; the health of our society is diminished in the generations to come. Please do not tell the children of Connecticut and their descendants that the State believes that they do not need to be raised by both a mother and a father. Instead, please continue to support our State's definition that marriage is between a man and a woman. Thank you.

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Respectfully Submitted



Thomas Finn, Ph.D.

WHY WE OPPOSE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE/UNIONS

Thomas Finn, Ph.D.

BACKGROUND

In the last several years, we have witnessed a passionate public debate concerning the nature and meaning of marriage. This debate has been triggered by small, but well-organized, groups of homosexual activists seeking to equate same-sex relationships to marriage between a man and woman, thereby altering the very nature of marriage. In the words of one activist, "Being queer means pushing the parameters of sex, sexuality and family and, in the process, transforming the very fabric of society."¹ This movement has been met with a growing response to preserve marriage as a union of one male and one female in a permanent and exclusive commitment in which the expression of sexual love serves both the individual and society through the birth and rearing of children and the strengthening of the bond between husband and wife.

The following information clarifies several assumptions used to support arguments for changing the nature of marriage and describes why these assumptions are incorrect. In doing so, reasons why we must preserve marriage as the union of two sexes are presented.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE MOVEMENT

1. Preserving marriage as the union of one man and one woman reflects hatred and bigotry.

Working to preserve traditional marriage does not make someone a hateful bigot. We believe in the dignity of all human persons, regardless of how they live their lives, and hold that all persons are to be treated with compassion and respect. It is out of a desire to foster the well-being of human persons and, therefore, the well-being of society, that we stand against this attempt to further erode the foundations of marriage and family in our culture.

2: Sexual orientation and sexual behavior are innate or "inborn" characteristics.

This belief became more popular in the early 1990's, when the media reported that several research investigations had found a genetic or biological cause for homosexuality. One study looked at the differences in the size of a small area of the brain in presumed homosexual vs. heterosexual subjects (Levay, 1991)², another studied the number of identical twins who both identified themselves as homosexual (Bailey and Pillard, 1991)³, and a third tried to look at chromosomal differences in homosexual vs. heterosexual subjects (Hamer, et al., 1992)⁴. While many people were quick to use these studies to support the notion that homosexuality was set before birth, the authors of these studies actually concluded that their findings pointed to the importance of environmental and cultural factors in the development of homosexuality, not that homosexuality was genetically or biologically determined.^{5,6,7,8} Other scientists have since confirmed that homosexuality does not have a genetic cause.^{9,10,11}

It should also be noted that the number of persons living a homosexual lifestyle is small, (1% to 3% of the population,¹² less than 6/10 of 1% of households in Connecticut are occupied by same-sex partners;¹³ not 10%-15% as we are often told). Even if homosexuality was genetically determined, it would have disappeared over the centuries since the people who identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual would be unable to pass such a characteristic down through the generations due to the fact that they have so few biological children.¹⁴

A second line of reasoning behind the assumption that homosexuality is an innate characteristic is the belief that sexual orientation cannot be changed. Although activists would like us to believe this, research supporting the successful leaving of a homosexual lifestyle has existed for many decades.^{15,16,17,18,19,20} In addition, a study conducted at the Univ. of Chicago found that boys who, at age 16, identified themselves as homosexual, 75% no longer identified themselves as homosexual by age 25.²¹ This change occurred without intervention. To quote one researcher: "The assumption that people can't change is a political conclusion rather than a scientific one."²²

The assumption that homosexuality is a purely inborn characteristic is false. The consensus of researchers is that homosexuality is influenced by a constellation of family, social, biological, learning and personality factors, but these factors do not determine a person's sexual orientation, lifestyle or behavior nor do they remove a person's free will.^{23,24,25}

3. Children do not need a mother and a father.

Those wishing to re-define marriage ask us to believe that purposely and permanently depriving a child of either a mother or a father will not harm that child. In fact, they tell us that scientific literature demonstrates that children who grow up in gay or lesbian households are no different from children raised in "heterosexual households." First of all, the "scientific literature" to which activists refer is a series of articles published predominantly by researchers sympathetic to the homosexual agenda who used scientifically invalid research methods (e.g. small samples, lack of random sampling, bias on the part of the subjects, etc.). Their research methods were so bad that these authors actually stated in their publications that they could not establish any valid conclusions from their work.^{26,27} Secondly, these researchers rarely compared children from same-sex households to children reared in homes with both their mother and father present. Instead the "heterosexual households," used for comparison were mainly single parent homes.

Valid research conducted over decades points to the reality that children who grow up in a home with both a mother and father are physically, emotionally, socially, academically and behaviorally better off than children reared without a mother and father present.^{28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38}

Certainly no one would conclude that a child who grows up in a single-parent home will be unable to thrive. Thanks to the dedication and sacrifice of his or her mom or dad, wonderful growth can occur, but, as a whole, the challenges facing kids who don't have

both mom and dad at home are significant and include higher rates of poverty,²⁹ physical abuse and neglect,³⁹ injury,³⁹ illness, emotional and behavioral problems,⁴⁰ legal problems⁴¹ and their own future divorce.²⁸

Additionally, research also shows that same-sex homes are different in other important ways which place children at risk. People living a gay or lesbian life-style experience higher rates of domestic violence,^{42,43} mental health problems,^{44,45} substance abuse,^{46,47} and lower life expectancies.⁴⁸ Homosexuals are also much more promiscuous than married heterosexuals and few homosexual relationships last longer than two years.^{49,50} One study found that 43% of white gay men have 500 or more sexual partners over a lifetime, while 28% have 1,000 or more.⁵¹ In another study of 156 gay couples, every couple that was together for more than five years had sex outside their "committed" relationship.⁵² In contrast, over 75% of married heterosexual couples remain faithful over their lifetime.^{53,54}

A number of studies have looked at how many children raised by gay and lesbian parents practice homosexual behavior in their own lifetimes.^{55,56,57} These children show an increased incidence of homosexual behavior, (9% to 27% higher).^{58,59} Since we know that engaging in homosexual sexual activity is associated with significant increase in health problems including infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases,^{60,61} changing the definition of marriage to include same-sex partners who, as a group, model relationships that are non-monogamous and temporary⁶¹ will place more children at risk.

If same-sex marriage or unions are legalized, adoption and foster-care placements into same-sex homes would increase, placing children in settings vulnerable to the above influences and risks. Contrary to what activists may imply, children are at greater risk if they are raised outside of a home in which both a mother and father are present. The homosexual movement appears more concerned with placing the desires of same-sex couples ahead of the intrinsic right of every child to the healthiest family environment possible which is that provided by a man and women in marriage.

4. Refusing to legalize same-sex marriage is discrimination and a violation of civil rights.

Marriage was not created by government and it is not an individual right. The U.S. Constitution and individual State Constitutions do not grant a right that a person can marry anyone of their choosing (that is, adults can't marry children, siblings can't marry siblings, etc.). Laws recognizing marriage have been created to identify how a society will support this institution most central to maintaining that society's stability, but these laws do not create the nature of marriage. In other words, government has never had to determine that marriage is a relationship between one man and one woman; rather, government has only recognized it as such. Activists now want government to actually re-define the nature of marriage, which it simply cannot do. Comparisons to the civil rights movement and the changing of laws related to interracial marriage are also not valid since the target of these changes was racial segregation, not re-defining the nature of marriage...it remained one man, one woman, one lifetime.

What about other rights that activists say they can't have without same-sex marriage such as hospital visitation, the making of medical decisions, inheritance, etc.? Simply put, all of these "rights" or privileges are available to same-sex couples, via durable power of attorney, designation of health care agent/conservator, wills, living trusts, designation of custody of remains in case of death, etc. Marriage does not need to be re-defined in order obtain them.

5: The Bible and religious tradition does not prohibit homosexual behavior.

This assumption attacks the faith foundation of our culture in an attempt to create doubt and remove morality as an objection to same-sex marriages/unions. The Bible remains clear, however, that homosexual behavior is not part of God's plan for love and sexuality. In both the Old and New Testaments, scripture doesn't waiver and reinforces the truth that the expression of sexual intimacy is designed for a man and woman in marriage. See these scriptural references:

-Genesis 2:18-24 -Genesis 19:1-29 -Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 -Judges 19-21
-Mark 10:2-12 -Romans 1:24-32 -1 Corinthians 6:9-11 -Timothy 1:8-11

SUMMARY

We oppose the re-definition of marriage. The assumptions behind the homosexual agenda are unfounded and are used by activists to seek our society's affirmation of individual's living a homosexual lifestyle. In doing so, our society's need for a strong institution of marriage is overlooked. It is up to each of us to challenge the same-sex union movement so that the truth concerning the goodness of traditional marriage can be seen through the light of reason and experience. The health and well-being of children, of adults and of society depends on the nurturing power of the family centered in one man and one woman in a life-long, faithful, and fruitful marriage.

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