

## SB 899

Honorable Chairman, Honorable Committee, Ladies & Gentlemen:

I am here as an historian and a grandfather to remind us of the obvious. We must beware in this winter of our discontent, lest in building a room for a disadvantaged minority we knock down the house that shelters us all. First, heterosexual marriage is essential to the long-term health of society. Second, Connecticut needs children who have learned to tune their desires to their morals, not their morals to their desires. Third, freedom of conscience and of expression must be preserved for those who defend traditional moral teachings - and for their children - if democracy in Connecticut is to survive. We would urge that this bill be rejected. If exceptions must be provided for, then Section 17 should be amended to reaffirm our commitment as a State to heterosexual marriage, including the freedom of citizens to defend it and to protect their minor children from instruction they deem immoral—in a manner that the courts cannot misinterpret.

Heterosexual marriage is not the property of any one faith or nation, but of all mankind from earliest times. Any alternative models became extinct so long ago that there is no memory of them. Historic societies that devalued marriage soon collapsed under the weight of social pathology, falling birthrates, and loss of civic patriotism. The long term health of any society has been shown to depend on the health of its marriages. Put bluntly, we all came into this world as the result of a heterosexual act. If that act did not take place in the context of a healthy permanent marriage, we have a just grievance against life and a disadvantage that follows us to the grave. This is a risk factor in all social pathologies from child abuse to crime to suicide.

Moral principles matter—as the current financial meltdown demonstrates. Healthy families teach their children to develop and govern their desires under the discipline of morality—not the reverse. This encourages the next generation to build successful marriages and a healthy society. The alternative view seems to be that children should select and develop their moral principles in accord with their desires. Or that there is no such thing as sexual morality at all. Such a paradigm is hardly conducive to healthy, permanent marriages or effective parenting—or a healthy society.

Will freedom survive? In effect, it has been determined that a troubled minority has the right to do what the majority believes to be morally wrong. Still, reasonable people believe this and similar legislation threatens the right of society to defend itself—to call any sort of sexual behavior wrong under any circumstances, to refuse to participate in what we believe to be wrong, to teach our children any sort of sexual morality or to shield them from alternative role models. This legislation needs to be redrawn in such a way that in giving rights to one segment of society it does not take away the rights—and moral foundations—of all the rest.

David W. Heughins, PhD  
Manchester, CT