



KARL VAN ROY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

For Immediate Release
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ASSEMBLY PASSES MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

Decision now rests in the hands of state voters

MADISON - State Representative Karl Van Roy (R-Howard) announced today the Assembly passage of AJR 67 / SJR 53 which was the legislature's second consideration of a proposed constitutional amendment that would specify that only marriage between one man and one woman will be recognized as valid in this state. The fate of the resolution now rests in the hands of the voting public who will decide this issue by statewide referendum on the November 2006 ballot.

"According to survey results in my district, over 85% of my constituents are in favor of this definition," stated Van Roy. "As the representative of that majority, I feel it is appropriate to allow this amendment to be brought forward so the people of Wisconsin can decide this issue for themselves, once and for all."

In 1996, President Clinton signed a law which, for the purposes of federal law, defines marriage as between people of the opposite sex, and for the purposes of state law, allows each individual state to decide whether to deny or recognize same-sex marriages that are legal in other states, like Vermont. State efforts to adopt a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman began after an activist court in Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriage in the Goodridge decision, stating that "civil marriage is an evolving paradigm."

"Under the Goodridge rationale, marriage could evolve into three, five or even ten people," said Van Roy. "My constituents have told me loud and clear that they feel marriage should remain as it always has been - between one man and one woman only."

In September 2005, two women and one man were legally married to each other in the Netherlands. In January 2006, a study commissioned by the Canadian government recommended legalizing polygamy. Back in 1973, Wisconsin State Representative Lloyd Barbie introduced AJR 40, which called for an advisory referendum on legalizing group marriage for as many as 12 persons.

"Amending the state constitution is not a situation taken lightly," stated Van Roy. "This resolution has been thoroughly evaluated by the legislature over the past two sessions. Contrary to what opponents are saying about the bill, the attorneys at the non-partisan Legislative Council have repeatedly stated that this resolution does not prohibit the state, local governments, or private entities from setting up their own legal construct to provide health insurance benefits, pension benefits, hospital visitation rights, joint tax return filing, and numerous other privileges and benefits to unmarried persons as those entities see fit to offer. To date, no marriage amendment in the country has been interpreted to preclude the granting of benefits to unmarried persons."

Nineteen states have already passed constitutional amendments defining marriage as between one man and one woman. Six more states will be taking up the issue on their ballots this spring or fall. Four states may have the issue placed on the ballot by citizen initiative for this fall, and another four states are expected to have it ready for a ballot vote in 2007 and 2008.