

Testimony of Gerry D'Avolio Before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary in Favor of the Protection of Marriage Bill, May 17, 2001

My name is Gerald D'Avolio, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference.

It is important to state at the outset that we are here to defend and support the longstanding definition of marriage. We are not here to attack the honor or motivation of those who seek to change the definition of marriage.

The Catholic vision of the definition of marriage is simple to state. Marriage is a partnership of one man and one woman who are joined together for their own mutual good and for the procreation and education of children.

Because the marital relationship uniquely benefits, unlike any other, to persons, to society, and to the church, we wish to make it clear that the institution of marriage, as the union of one man and one woman, must be preserved, protected, and promoted in both private and public realms. At a time when family life is under significant stress, the principled defense of marriage is an urgent necessity for the wellbeing of children and families, and for the common good of society.

While the right of a man and a woman to marry is a revered freedom, the right to define marriage as anything other than the union between a man and a woman lacks any support in the traditions of all cultures, in the traditions of major world religions and in the annals of history.

Thus, we oppose attempts to grant the legal status of marriage to any relationship other than a man or a woman.

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference urges the Committee to pass House Bill 3375 "The protection of Marriage Bill".