



# ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Statement of the Archdiocese of Washington on DC City Council Bill to Redefine Marriage in the Nation's Capital**

Marriage is a personal relationship with public significance. Marriage between a man and a woman transcends cultures, religions and all time. Marriage is about more than two people who love and are committed to each other.

It also is about creating and nurturing the next generation. As natural law and biology dictate, this requires both a man and a woman. Men and women complement each other physically, psychologically and emotionally and each has distinctive gifts for a child's upbringing. They are not interchangeable.

Nature intends for children to have a mother and a father. Research tells us a healthy marriage with a father and mother provides the most stable and nurturing environment for a child. This is the reason that civil governments have given marriage special recognition throughout time.

The bill introduced today by some members of the District of Columbia City Council to redefine marriage is at odds with marriage's fundamental purpose. You cannot redefine biology.

The "Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009" is not about religious freedom. In fact, there are legitimate concerns that this legislation will result in a loss of religious liberty of the people of the District of Columbia. If passed, the bill could require Catholics to make choices between a "law" and the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church.

This is the second time in six months that the DC City Council has sought to redefine marriage. In the spring, the Council pushed through a bill recognizing same sex marriages from other jurisdictions, without an opportunity for residents to give input.

Today's action by the DC City Council would put the District of Columbia in the minority nationwide. Forty states have constitutional or legislative protection of marriage, while only five states have redefined marriage.

We urge our elected officials to respect the purpose of marriage as the union of one man and one woman for their mutual benefit and for the rights of children.

*A request for a ballot initiative to define marriage as between a man and a woman was filed by a coalition of groups in September. The Archdiocese of Washington submitted a letter supporting that request before the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics.*

*Learn more about marriage and the Catholic Church at [www.MarriageMattersDC.org](http://www.MarriageMattersDC.org).*