



THE FAMILY  
POLICY COUNCIL  
OF WEST VIRGINIA

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## NEWS Release

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### Nearly half of WV Senate sponsors Marriage Protection Amendment

*Resolution calls for vote on 19-word definition of marriage at special election in 2010;  
'Let us vote!' marriage rally to be held Thursday*

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** — Almost half of West Virginia's state senators have signed on as sponsors to a marriage protection amendment resolution promoted by the Family Policy Council of West Virginia, which will hold a "Let Us Vote!" marriage rally Thursday at 12 p.m. at the West Virginia State Capitol.

"The West Virginia Senate is sending a strong message that there is no legitimate reason to prevent the voters of West Virginia from settling the legal definition of marriage," said Jeremy Dys, president and general counsel of the FPCWV. "The Senate appears to understand that West Virginians want to vote on the definition of marriage. Their responsibility as senators is to respect every West Virginian's right to vote on this issue."

The proposed amendment, which a recent [poll](#) indicates is supported by at least 78 percent of registered Democrat voters, was introduced with broad bipartisan support, including the chairmen of three major senate committees and the vice-chairman of a fourth.

In all, 15 senators sponsored the resolution, including, Sens. Helmick (D-Pocahontas), Oliverio (D-Monongalia), Prezioso (D-Marion), Plymale (D-Wayne), Jenkins (D-Cabell), Stollings (D-Boone), Green (D-Raleigh), Yost (D-Brooke), Facemire (D-Braxton), Boley (R-Pleasants), Facemyer (R-Jackson), Deem (R-Wood), Hall (R-Putnam), Sypolt (R-Presont), and Guills (R-Greenbrier).

If approved, the resolution, SJR 14, would allow West Virginians to settle the legal definition of marriage at a special election in 2010. It proposes a simple 19-word definition of marriage: "Only the union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as marriage in West Virginia."

Yet, before the question can be submitted to voters, members of both the House and the Senate must approve the resolution by a supermajority vote. Del. Barbara Fleischauer (D-Monongalia), who, during this session, convened the Committee on Constitutional Revision for the first time since 2003, has previously killed similar measures by refusing to place them on the committee's agenda. Growing support for the measure among House Democrats, however, may compel her to reconsider. Sen. Kessler has not indicated whether he will include the measure on the agenda of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

“Now that the Senate has shown such strong support for it, will the House of Delegates agree the democratic process applies to all West Virginians, not just those running for office?” asked Dys. “More than 50 million Americans in 30 states have voted in favor of defining marriage as one man and one woman in their state's constitutions. Voters in West Virginia are beginning to believe that silence by their lawmakers on this issue is, in fact, opposition.”

Meanwhile, the FPCWV has launched, “I'm voting for marriage...,” an aggressive petition drive across the state. It hopes to secure more than 2,500 signatures by Feb. 25 from voters who agree that support for marriage is an important part of what they look for in a candidate. The petition is being circulated in churches across the state and online at [www.wvformarriage.com/petition](http://www.wvformarriage.com/petition).

*The Family Policy Council of West Virginia is a servant organization that advocates for policies that embrace the sanctity of human life, enrich marriage, and safeguard religious freedom.*

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