



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 28, 2015

## Thousands March for Traditional Marriage in D.C.

An estimated 10,000 people marched in the third annual March for Marriage in Washington, D.C., on April 25. The event was organized by the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), which defines its mission as “work[ing] to defend marriage and the faith communities that sustain it at the local, state, and national levels.”

The Princeton, New Jersey-based NOM is led by Brian S. Brown, former executive director of the Family Institute of Connecticut, which has been a vocal opponent of assisted suicide, abortion, and same-sex “marriage” in Connecticut.



During a speakers’ program held for marchers in front of the U.S. Supreme Court building, Brown said: “The people of this nation know what marriage is, and we do not want it redefined.”

The March for Marriage took place three days before the Supreme Court began hearing arguments on April 28 in four cases weighing whether states that bar same-sex marriage must recognize such unions that are legal in other states.

AP reported that the cases before the court come from Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee, which comprise four of the 14 states that allow only traditional heterosexual marriage. Those states’ bans on same-sex marriage were upheld by the federal appeals court in Cincinnati in November. Only 11 states have legalized same-sex marriage through ballot measures or the legislature, however — the others coming about by means of court rulings.

The program held in conjunction with the march featured several religious leaders, highlighting the moral impetus for participants to defend marriage. One of the most high-ranking religious leaders to speak was Joseph Kurtz, who is archbishop of the Diocese of Louisville, Kentucky, and current president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Kurtz said that society’s view of regarding marriage only as “an adult friendship” loses sight of the “sacrificial love” and “one flesh union that Jesus Himself spoke of” that form the basis for marriage as an institution. The archbishop explained:

We have not cultivated the basis for sacrificial love but have, in a sense, fallen victims of a culture that tends to talk about adult choices and options.

I think we’re returning now very much to our roots, saying that at the basis of a good, healthy civilization and society is a family, and at the basis of that family is a sacrificial love

Jim Garlow, pastor of Skyline Church in La Mesa, California, warned that the Supreme Court should not “box with God.” “You mess with the definition of marriage and you burn, you’re toast, you cannot win,” said Garlow. “Your arms are too short to box with God. In 50 years they will laugh at you just like they’ll laugh at same-sex marriage.”

Other religious leaders speaking at the event included Ryan Dobson, son of Focus on the Family



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founder, Dr. James Dobson; Reverend Ruben Diaz, an ordained minister who is pastor of Christian Community Neighborhood Church in the Bronx as well as a New York state senator; and Reverend Bill Owens, founder and president of the Coalition of African American Pastors. Owens told those gathered:

I am a loving father, and I can tell you it's a difference between a mother and a father. They love me, but boy they love their mother. How can a man be a mother? A man cannot be a mother. I cannot be a mother to my children, but I can be a good father to my children.

The marchers also heard from secular speakers, including Jennifer Marshall, vice president for the Institute for Family, Community and Opportunity at the Heritage Foundation. Marshall said, "Marriage existed before this government or any government," and is "two halves of humanity coming together for the future of humanity."

Liberty Counsel's Matt Staver told the crowd, "When an earthly law collides with a higher law, we have no choice but to obey the higher law," and warned that "a re-definition of marriage is a line we will not cross."

Liberty Counsel is a non-profit public interest law firm and ministry that provides free legal assistance in defense of "Christian religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, and the traditional family." It works in close association with Liberty University, and Staver is Liberty University's law school dean.

NOM has been engaged in its defense of traditional marriage for several years. It led the initiative to pass California's Proposition 8 in 2008. After being passed by 52 percent of California voters, the state constitution was amended to read that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." The victory was short-lived, however, as Chief Judge Vaughn Walker of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California ruled in August 2010 that the amendment was unconstitutional under both the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the 14th Amendment.

While people of faith and constitutional conservatives agree on issues such as the right to life and traditional marriage, not all follow the same approach to solving these moral dilemmas, which are often exacerbated by an overreaching federal court system.

Some conservatives think that the answer is to fight fire with fire and solve the problem at the federal level, by attempting to pass a human personhood or federal marriage amendment. However, aside from the difficulty in getting an amendment passed, even if successful, the amendment would grant more power to the federal government to enforce matters traditionally (and constitutionally) reserved to the states.

When he was in Congress, former Representative Paul (R-Texas) repeatedly introduced a bill he called the "We the People Act," which would have prohibited all federal courts from hearing cases on abortion, same-sex marriage, and establishment of religion matters, unless such a case were a challenge to the constitutionality of federal law. Paul told Congress: "The best guarantor of true liberty is decentralized political institutions, while the greatest threat to liberty is concentrated power." The bill was endorsed by Reverend Chuck Baldwin, the Constitution Party's 2008 candidate for president.

Though the "We the People Act" would have settled many conflicts between the federal government and the states on morality issues, it never gained sufficient traction in Congress to be brought up for a vote.

Yet another strategy advocated by conservatives to defend marriage at the state level is nullification. In 2006, Alabama's voters chose to amend their state's constitution in order to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. The measure passed by an overwhelming 80 percent-plus majority.



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However, U.S. District Judge Callie Granade recently ruled that the definition of marriage in Alabama had to conform to recent federal rulings recognizing same-sex marriage.

In response to this federal judicial overreach, Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court Roy Moore sent a letter to Governor Robert Bentley stating: “As you know, nothing in the United States Constitution grants the federal government the authority to redefine the institution of marriage.” Moore also pointed out that the people of Alabama had only recently amended the state’s constitution stating that marriage is a “sacred covenant, solemnized between a man and a woman.”

In an [article on the matter posted on February 3](#), John F. McManus, president of The John Birch Society and publisher of *The New American*, noted:

Moore’s letter even cited an 1825 opinion registered by Thomas Jefferson regarding nullification of unconstitutional federal mandates, a stand he will stand by. States, said Jefferson, could refuse to comply with unjust and unconstitutional federal dictates. Moore also pointed to the 10th Amendment and its clear affirmation that “powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution” remain with the states and the people — and no such delegation of power had ever been made. Governor Bentley issued a statement supporting Judge Moore’s call for defiance.

The organizers and participants involved in the March for Marriage are undoubtedly moral people and courageous defenders of the family. It will be hoped by constitutionalists involved in the freedom fight that they will employ every constitutional weapon available to them to roll back federal power as they fight to save the family.

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