



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 2, 2012

## Traditional Marriage on the Line in Several States

The definition of marriage is a hotly contested issue in several states this election season, with proponents of traditional values making a strong push against the efforts of gay activists and their supporters to normalize homosexual behavior and legalize same-sex “marriage.”

In Washington state a poll by [Elway Research](#) found that the margin of victory for Referendum 74, the gay “marriage” initiative aggressively pushed by Governor Christine Gregoire, had shrunk dramatically from 51 to 37 percent in mid-September, to a mere 49 to 45 percent a month later.

In February, reported [The New American](#), Washington’s state legislature passed a measure legalizing same-sex “marriage,” and Gregoire quickly signed it into law. But champions of traditional marriage, led by a group called [Preserve Marriage Washington](#), blocked the law from going into effect by collecting over 200,000 signatures from state residents who opposed the measure, forcing the issue to be placed on the ballot as a voter initiative.

While early surveys seemed to indicate that homosexual activists had rallied enough supporters to approve the legalization of same-sex marriage, pro-family forces in the state worked diligently throughout summer and early fall to raise awareness of the negative implications of such a law. One result, warned Preserve Marriage Washington’s chairman, Joseph Blackholm, would be the teaching of homosexual behavior as normal in public schools. “When marriage is redefined to be a genderless institution, it impacts what children are taught,” said Blackholm. “In places where same-sex marriage has been imposed, kids as young as six and seven are taught about gay marriage in class. If R-74 is approved, local Washington schools could teach young children that gay marriage is just the same as traditional marriage, no matter what they have been taught at home, in church, or in their ethnic traditions.”

Such warning seemed to be working in the fight for traditional marriage, noted an analysis from Elway Research. “Opposition to Referendum 74 has grown over the past month, while support has stayed at virtually the same level since July,” noted the analysis.

Meanwhile in Maryland, a survey by the *Baltimore Sun* on Question 6, which would legalize homosexual “marriage” in the state, found both sides essentially dead even, with 47 percent of likely voters opposing same-sex “marriage,” while 46 percent approved its legalization. Significantly, a similar poll a month earlier found those in favor of same-sex “marriage” leading 49 to 39 percent.

As had happened in Washington state, in Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley quickly signed a same-sex “marriage” law passed by the state legislature in February, only to have the law challenged by champions of traditional marriage, forcing a ballot initiative. “The enormous public outcry that this legislation has generated ... demonstrates a clear need to take this issue to a vote of the people,” said Kathy Dempsey of the Maryland Catholic Conference, one of the groups leading the fight for marriage. “Every time this issue has been brought to a statewide vote, the people have upheld traditional marriage. When this issue reaches the November ballot, we are confident that the citizens of Maryland





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will join voters in 31 other states in upholding marriage between one man and one woman.”

[Baptist Press News](#) reported that in Maine, voters are also set to decide on the definition of marriage through its Question 1 ballot initiative. “A Pan American SMS Group survey conducted in early October showed Question 1 [in favor of same-sex marriage] winning, 55-39 percent, although an analysis by the polling group acknowledged that support in the poll likely was inflated,” reported the Baptist news site. A spokesman for the research group told the *Bangor Daily News* that the responses many people give to pollsters “may not in fact indicate what they plan to do [in the voting booth] because they don’t want to appear biased.”

Perhaps the most intense battle over marriage is occurring in Minnesota, where high-profile companies like [Target Corporation](#) and [General Mills](#) have come out in favor of same-sex “marriage,” applying varying amounts of pressure against a proposed state constitutional amendment that would define marriage as only between a man and a woman. A poll conducted by local TV/radio station KSTP found a veritable dead heat, with 47 percent of likely voters saying they were in favor of the pro-marriage amendment, while 46 percent said that would vote against it.

However, a [similar poll by KSTP in July](#) found that 52 percent of Minnesota voters favored the amendment, with only 39 percent saying they would vote against traditional marriage. John Helmberger, chairman of [Minnesota for Marriage](#), said that those early numbers indicated “what we’ve always believed: Our opponents have the cultural elite, wealthy contributors, and editorial writers, but we have voters on our side.” Helmberger added that he was “particularly pleased with the lead the amendment enjoys among Independent voters and the large percentage of Democratic voters who support the amendment.”

With the new poll indicating a much tighter contest, Helmberger insisted that his group was still confident that the amendment would pass. “We always knew this would be a close race,” he said October 17, “and strongly encourage our supporters to get out and work extra hard over the next 19 days to make sure that Minnesota is the 32nd state to pass a marriage protection amendment.”

In Washington, Maryland, Maine, and Minnesota, ads in favor of traditional marriage warned voters of the implications of legalizing same-sex marriage. The ads featured a Massachusetts couple, David and Tonia Parker. *Baptist Press News* related that in 2006, two years after Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriage, “the teacher in their son’s second-grade class read the students ‘King & King,’ a story about a prince who searches for a wife, only to choose another prince as his husband. The Parkers and another couple filed a lawsuit in federal court against the school, but a lower court ruled against them, asserting that ‘diversity is a hallmark of our nation’ and that such diversity ‘includes differences in sexual orientation.’ An appeals court upheld the decision.”

In the ads David Parker tells viewers: “After Massachusetts re-defined marriage, local schools taught it to children in second grade, including the school our son attended. Courts ruled parents have no right to take their children out of class — or to even be informed when this instruction was going to take place.”

Warns Tonia Parker: “Don’t make the same mistake and think that gay marriage won’t affect you.” Another ad features Jim O’Reilly, owner with his wife of a Vermont bed and breakfast, who were sued when they refused to host a wedding reception on their property for a lesbian couple. In the ad O’Reilly explains that the lesbian duo “sued us for not supporting their gay wedding because of our Christian beliefs. We had to pay \$30,000 and can no longer host any weddings at our inn.”



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