



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 8, 2012

NFL All-Pro Matt Birk Takes Stand for Traditional Marriage

Matt Birk, whose leadership on the football field has brought success to both the Minnesota Vikings and the Baltimore Ravens, is appearing in a short online video in support of the Minnesota Marriage Amendment, which that state's voters will decide on in the November elections. (See video below.) The amendment would define marriage in Minnesota as only between a man and a woman. The six-time Pro Bowl center, who grew up in St. Paul and is a strong Catholic as well as a married father of six, taped the video for the [Minnesota Catholic Conference](#), which has joined other religious and pro-family organizations to push for passage of the amendment.



“Outside and unfortunately even inside our own parishes, we have people telling us to stop talking about marriage, an institution that the church has been talking about for thousands of years,” Birk tells viewers of the video. “They say if we stand up and talk about the natural definition of marriage that we are somehow being mean or bullies. Supporting the basic rights of children and the authentic rights of people with same-sex attraction are not mutually exclusive, and we must resist the forces that are telling us otherwise.”

Birk goes on to explain that it is unfair to children “if we don’t make every effort to stand up for their rights, to be known and loved by their mother and their father whenever possible. While divorce, death, and other circumstances too often prevent it, no child should be intentionally deprived of knowing their mother and their father. If we allow genderless marriage to be made law, the implication is that the contributions of part of our community, either men or women, are somehow insignificant and less valuable.”

While saying that he can “put up” with such government-imposed hardships as higher taxes and prohibiting prayer in schools, Birk says that “letting a small number of business and government elites and judges define what marriage is for Minnesotans doesn’t seem very fair and doesn’t make a lot of sense.”

Appealing to his fellow Catholic Christians, Birk notes that “our culture today of moral relativism attacks marriage and a lot of our Catholic values, but marriage is a foundation of our society and it’s definitely something worth fighting for.... A lot of people say, live and let live, let everybody do what they want, but this is too important of an issue to do that on. We need to stand up and fight for it, and preserve it, for our children’s sake and for the sake of our entire society.”

Noting that marriage has existed far longer than the state and government, he challenges that “I don’t think it’s their place to redefine it. I think as human being most of us search for the truth ... and as Catholics we try to find what is God’s will. I believe this is God’s will, to stand up and fight for one of the gifts he blessed us with.”



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Birk concludes his message by encouraging his Minnesota Catholics “to vote ‘Yes’ to the Marriage Protection Amendment on November 6th”

Birk’s strong stand for marriage came as fellow Baltimore Ravens teammate Brendon Ayanbadejo offered his celebrity voice in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage. Birk emphasized that his stand was not meant to be a personal challenge to Ayanbadejo, but to demonstrate that there is more than one side to the debate. “I took a stance like other guys have done before me,” Birk said in a press conference at Ravens headquarters. “In doing so, it’s really not my aim to engage in any debates with any one person or persons. Obviously, we all have opinions....”

Birk told reporters that he had given Ayanbadejo a heads-up on the video, as well as on an editorial he had written for the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* newspaper. “I told him ... I was going to have a piece coming out,” said Birk. “I wanted to let him know so he wouldn’t be blindsided by it.”

In the October 2 *Star-Tribune* editorial, Birk wrote that “I think it is important to set the record straight about what the marriage debate is and is not about, and to clarify that not all NFL players think redefining marriage is a good thing.”

Birk, who is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in economics, explained that the “union of a man and a woman is privileged and recognized by society as ‘marriage’ for a reason, and it’s not because the government has a vested interest in celebrating the love between two people. With good reason, government recognizes marriages and gives them certain legal benefits so they can provide a stable, nurturing environment for the next generation of citizens: our kids.”

The devastating impact of “no-fault” divorce, adultery, and a casual attitude toward marriage “have done great harm to this sacred institution,” Birk wrote. “How much longer do we put the desires of adults before the needs of kids? Why are we not doing more to lift up and strengthen the institution of marriage?”

Same-sex marriage “may not affect my marriage specifically, but it will affect my children — the next generation,” challenged Birk. “Ideas have consequences, and laws shape culture. Marriage redefinition will affect the broader well-being of children and the welfare of society. As a Christian and a citizen, I am compelled to care about both.”

Birk, who was selected as the NFL’s Man of the Year for 2012, is one of many high-profile individuals who have taken a vocal stand for the Minnesota Marriage Amendment. “We are thankful to have someone like Matt Birk, who is a role model on and off the field, take a public stand on an issue that has such far-reaching social consequences,” said Jason Adkins, executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference. “We expect Catholics and non-Catholics alike will take notice.”



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