

MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
WEST END PLACE

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Following is the text of a letter addressed and sent individually to each legislator of the Massachusetts General Court on December 21, 2006 from the four Ordinaries of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield and Worcester. The letter urges the State Legislature to move the Marriage Amendment initiative petition forward by bringing it to a vote on January 2, 2007:

As the Roman Catholic Bishops in Massachusetts, with nearly 3 million parishioners throughout the state, we urge the Massachusetts General Court to vote on January 2, 2007 to move the Marriage Amendment forward to the next legislative session. Supporters of the amendment have followed the rules set out in the Massachusetts Constitution for citizens' initiative petitions, and legislators who have sworn to support that Constitution should do the same by allowing a vote to be taken on the amendment.


Preventing a vote on January 2nd would deny a significant number of our residents from having their voice heard on this issue. The guarantee that gives citizens the right to seek voter approval for constitutional changes would become an empty promise.


Some legislators seek to use procedural maneuvers to avoid voting on the Marriage Amendment in order to silence the debate. Those who support the consensus definition of marriage as the union of man and woman are being told that their views are not worthy in Massachusetts. Please give serious consideration to the fact that redefining marriage weakens an institution whose health is critical to the common good. By inventing new entitlements that trample the institution of marriage, four unelected judges have done a great disservice to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Court has engendered deep divisions by imputing prejudice to those who do not accept their ruling. We applaud those legislators who did not give in to political pressure and who fulfilled their oath to uphold the Constitution by voting against recessing the Constitutional Convention.

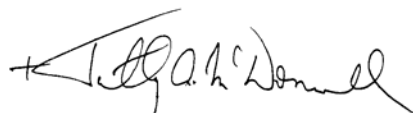
Efforts to evade a vote will prolong a contentious constitutional debate. We appeal to you as legislators not to surrender to pressure to vote to recess and thereby violate your sworn duty to uphold the Constitution.

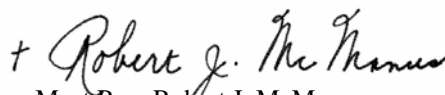
We respectfully but firmly request that you allow a vote in the Legislature, so that the people may vote their conscience and conviction in November 2008. Let the democratic process take its course. Be true to your responsibilities as public servants—allow the people to exercise their rightful sovereignty.

Respectfully,

  
Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley  
Archdiocese of Boston

  
Most Rev. George W. Coleman  
Diocese of Fall River

  
Most Rev. Timothy A. McDonnell  
Diocese of Springfield

  
Most Rev. Robert J. McManus  
Diocese of Worcester