



Dear Friend,

We find ourselves at a pivotal time for Connecticut families: perhaps the most pivotal time in a generation. Thank you for the opportunity to briefly share with you a major project the Family Institute has undertaken this year to turn the tide in favor of the family: The Marriage Definition Initiative.

As many of you know, since 1989 the Family Institute of Connecticut has worked to encourage and strengthen the family as the foundation of society and to promote sound ethical and moral values in our culture and government.

In Connecticut, marriage is under assault. In 2005, the state legislature voted to legalize same-sex civil unions. Many in the state legislature voted to go even farther than that, attempting to legalize same-sex "marriage" and to even to allow minors to marry same-sex partners. As I write this, a case called Kerrigan is pending in New Haven Superior Court. Supported by national gay and lesbian legal groups, it seeks to use courts to extend the definition of marriage to same-sex couples here in Connecticut.

Against this gray backdrop of anti-family developments in our state shine rays of hope and of opportunity: Opportunity to educate, to elect, to lead, and to affect change for the good of the family here in Connecticut. The Marriage Definition Initiative is a bold long-term campaign designed to capitalize on those opportunities in this decisive time in our state, rallying effort around four main goals:

**Affect Change.** We believe the only way to truly defend the traditional definition of marriage is to protect it by amending the Connecticut State Constitution, where activist judges, interest groups, and radical legislators cannot chip away at its meaning or effect. Because Connecticut does not have a popular referendum process, and because the state legislature will certainly not support such a measure, we have focused our attention on a state Constitutional Convention. Every twenty years an automatic constitutional review process made available to voters. Connecticut residents have the opportunity to vote to authorize a Constitutional Convention to consider amendments to the state constitution. 2006 should be that year, but political leaders opposed to the process are attempting to delay the process until 2008, when they believe they will have a better opportunity to defeat a pro-family agenda. With Connecticut's leading constitutional scholar on our side, the Family Institute is fighting in every way possible by challenging the delay and rallying a coalition of organizations to make sure the question of the Convention is on the ballot this November so that the people can decide this critical question. Once the convention is set, our goal is to obtain a majority "yes" vote for a constitutional convention and, through that convention secure an amendment to the Connecticut State Constitution defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

**Educate.** When people genuinely understand the issues, understand what's at stake, and understand how the family is under attack here in Connecticut, they overwhelmingly support a pro-family agenda. Sadly, the politicians and the media lie, spin, mischaracterize, and avoid issues altogether to advance their agenda. Through a comprehensive outreach and education campaign, our goal is to educate the public on these critical issues. We will share the facts. We will speak the truth. We will expose the motives and the agenda of those who would seek to undermine the strength of our families.

**Elect.** Unfortunately, the Connecticut Legislature has grown increasingly anti-family and influenced by radical and extreme groups. Our goal is to support and elect legislators that reflect the pro-family views of the citizens of Connecticut, not of special interests. We will provide the public with voter guides and critical information on their legislators. We will seek to hold legislators accountable by asking them to support a Marriage Pledge. We will involve people in the process by helping them contact their legislators, sign and circulate petitions, and have their voices heard on these issues.

**Lead.** Many groups in Connecticut support a pro-family agenda. A great majority of Connecticut residents support this agenda as well. Extremists opposed to this agenda have been most successful when outspoken pro-family voices, like the Family Institute, have been few or have been shouted over by well-funded and radical interest groups or by unaccountable politicians. Our goal is to develop a grassroots coalition of pro-family groups, organizations, leaders, and committed individuals to support our agenda. Through this coalition, we seek to expand the resources, the influence, and the effectiveness of the pro-family agenda.

Because 2006 is a critical year and a decisive moment in Connecticut, we believe we must make every effort to win this fight. Make no mistake, marriage and families will be impacted this year, whether through the intervention of activist courts, an unaccountable legislature, outside liberal interest groups, or through our efforts and those of like-minded groups throughout Connecticut.

Enclosed you will find materials about the Marriage Definition Initiative and how you can help our efforts.

The Family Institute stands on the side of marriage, of values, and of morality. Please, stand with us, in whatever way you can, as we seek to protect marriage once and for all in Connecticut.

Most Sincerely Yours,

Brian S. Brown, Executive Director, Family Institute of Connecticut

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