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**BISHOPS' STATEMENT ON  
THE SJC DECISION REGARDING THE MARRIAGE AMENDMENT**

December 29, 2006

Last week we sent each member of the Massachusetts General Court a letter, copied via email to their office, firmly requesting that they move the marriage amendment petition forward by bringing it to a vote at the Constitutional Convention on January 2, 2007.

Our request for a vote on the amendment follows from each member of the legislature having sworn an oath to support the Constitution, which gives citizens the right to vote on initiative petitions. We believe that a legislator's vote to recess violates their sworn duty to uphold the Constitution.

The commentary by the Supreme Judicial Court in its decision regarding the marriage amendment reinforces what we said in our letter. The Court wrote, "The members of the joint session have a constitutional duty to vote, by the yeas and nays, on the merits of all pending initiative amendments before recessing on January 2, 2007." The Court also wrote, "The members of the General Court are the people's elected representatives, and each one of them has taken an oath to uphold the Constitution of the Commonwealth."

We ask the members of the legislature to be mindful of the words they spoke when they took their oath of office. We ask them to consider what it means to violate that oath by failing to vote on the merits of the marriage amendment.

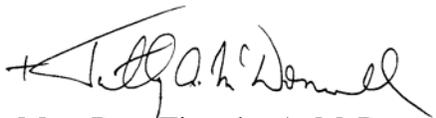
As we wrote in our letter on December 21, 2006 "Let the democratic process take its course. Be true to your responsibilities as public servants – allow the people to exercise their rightful sovereignty."



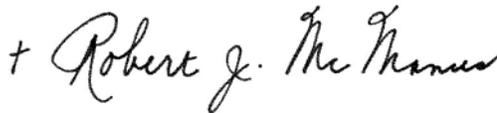
Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley  
Archbishop  
Archdiocese of Boston



Most Rev. George W. Coleman  
Bishop  
Diocese of Fall River



Most Rev. Timothy A. McDonnell  
Bishop  
Diocese of Springfield



Most Rev. Robert J. McManus  
Bishop  
Diocese of Worcester