

**MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

To: Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary
From: Daniel Avila, Esq., Associate Director for Policy & Research
Re: House 1710, “An Act to Protect Massachusetts Families Through Equal Access to Civil Marriage;” House 1728, “An Act to Repeal the Prohibition of Certain Residents to Marry in the Commonwealth;” Senate 800, “An Act Concerning Marriage Laws;” Senate 918, “An Act to Protect Massachusetts Families Through Equal Access to Civil Marriage;” and Senate 1029, “An Act Relative to Marriage.”
Date: March 4, 2008

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference (“Conference”) respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to House 1710 and 1728, and Senate 800, 918, and 1029, all of which propose the codification of, or the expansion of non-resident access to, marriage licenses in the Commonwealth for same-sex couples.

In 2003, the Supreme Judicial Court redefined marriage in Massachusetts by judicial fiat without the backing of the public. Despite the petitions of an unprecedented number of Massachusetts citizens calling for a ballot question, in 2007 the General Court barred the public from voting on a proposal for a state constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

As a result, the Commonwealth has embarked on a revolutionary experiment that poses incalculable societal dangers, especially for children. The stage has been set in Massachusetts for the institutional disintegration of the family.

The above-referenced bills seek to cement and expand access to the radical change in marriage policy engineered by the judiciary. When these bills are considered in conjunction with House 1722, the pattern is clear. That bill is also before this Committee, and by introducing it, advocates for same-sex marriage seek to extend the revolution even further by creating a “civil right” to engage in sexual behavior in public. See my March 4, 2008 legislative testimony before the Judiciary Committee providing a preliminary legal analysis of H. 1722. The codification of marriage licenses for same sex couples in Massachusetts is necessary for reinforcing the judicial roots of this radical revolution, and the abolition of residency requirements seeks to import it to foreign venues.

For these reasons, the Conference urges the Committee to give House 1710 and 1728, and Senate 800, 918 and 1029 unfavorable reports recommending that these bills ought not pass.

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference is the public policy office of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the Commonwealth, representing the Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Fall River, Springfield, and Worcester.