

MIXED RESULTS ON GAY MARRIAGE BILLS

When the D.C. gay marriage bill was first introduced, the Archdiocese of Washington kept quiet because the bill protected the rights of churches and other houses of worship not to perform gay marriages. But then the gay overreach took place: the language was changed to narrow the religious liberty protections. Because the archdiocese feared that the new language could be used to force it to provide health benefits to gay couples, and allow for gay adoption, it said it could not abide by the provisions of the revised bill. In practical terms, this meant that Catholic Charities would suspend its city services, a move that would terminate its medical clinics, foster care and adoption services, tutoring for GED tests, mental health services, homeless shelters, etc.

The reaction from the Church's critics was not only harsh, it was over the top. "What the Church is doing is an uncharitable and cruel maneuver," wrote Petula Dvorak in the *Washington Post*. In the Huffington Post, Allison Kilkenny concluded that "If gay folk can marry, the Catholic church refuses to feed the homeless." Adele M. Stan at AlterNet.com said that this decision, along with the bishops' opposition to the health care bill that offered abortion coverage, "serve the bishops' obsession with the sex lives and reproductive organs of others." She showed her true colors when she opined, "As an institution, it [the Catholic Church] ranks among the world's most sexually dysfunctional."

If Alabama Governor George Wallace had told the Archdiocese of Mobile that as a condition of receiving state aid for social services it had to cease performing interracial marriages, few would have criticized the archdiocese for exercising its doctrinal prerogatives. Indeed, it may have even been applauded for doing so. Now it should not matter what the

issue is that the Church decides it cannot in good conscience support—what should matter is its First Amendment right to do so. The unprincipled, of course, cannot understand such logic.

Unfortunately, the bill was passed and signed into law by D.C. mayor Adrian M. Fenty on December 18.

A few weeks prior to D.C.'s bill being passed and signed, some good news came out of the New York State Senate: it rejected a bill legalizing gay marriage by a vote of 38-24. Earlier that day, the Huffington Post ran a headline that was classic. It said, "START SPREADING THE NEWS: New York Debating Historic Gay Marriage Measure, Vote to be Razor Thin."

After those who sought to reinvent the institution of marriage got clobbered, we were all too happy to "START SPREADING THE NEWS."

Kudos to New York State Senator Reuben Diaz and all of the other good men and women who resisted this illegitimate push to treat marriage and the family as if they were merely items on a moral smorgasbord of lifestyle choices. Too bad that their D.C. counterparts didn't follow suit.