

NEW JERSEY GRANTS SAME BENEFITS TO GAY UNIONS

The New Jersey Supreme Court said today that gay couples have a constitutional right to the same benefits as married men and women, but it stopped short of saying gays had the right to marry. Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“This is a plus for those of us who have been pressing for a constitutional amendment that would limit marriage to a union between a man and a woman. Indeed, this is a wakeup call to the vast majority of Americans who are opposed to gay marriage but are reluctant to access the constitutional amendment process as the right remedy. Their reluctance is prudent: it is a grave decision to amend the constitution. But when faced with the prospect of arrogant judges who continue to appropriate powers to themselves that are nowhere authorized in law, many will now reconsider their reservations.

“By a wide margin, the American people have defeated state resolutions that would allow for gay marriage (it lost in all 11 states that had this issue on the ballot in 2004). Survey data disclose the same results: a *Daily News* poll of New York City residents in 2004 reported that by a margin of 47-40 percent, they did not want gay marriage. And if New Yorkers can't accept the idea of Frank and Freddie tying the knot, it's not likely to play well in Peoria.

“Judge Deborah T. Poritz offered a dissenting opinion saying that not only should gay unions have the same benefits as married couples, they should be awarded the title of marriage. Whatever one might say about her reasoning, she at least has more integrity than some of her colleagues: those who voted in

the majority claimed the right to substantively alter the traditional understanding of marriage, graciously allowing the public to call it anything they want. How thoughtful.

“Quite frankly, if we’re going to have despotic judges, we might as well demand honest ones.”