

SENATOR KENNEDY'S IDEA OF BIGOTRY

On June 7, the Senate voted not to advance the Marriage Protection Amendment, which would have defined marriage in the U.S. as between a man and a woman only.

Those in favor of advancing the amendment fell one vote short of a majority, 49-48, although 60 votes were needed to send the amendment to an up-or-down vote in the Senate. Sixty-seven votes were needed for the Senate to approve the constitutional amendment.

Debate was heated on both sides, but Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts provided the most outrageous remark. "A vote for this amendment is a vote for bigotry pure and simple."

Bill Donohue responded to the Senator's statement.

"A vote for the Marriage Protection Amendment is a vote to maintain the traditional understanding of marriage as it has been accepted for thousands of years all over the world. To brand those who support this amendment as bigots is mud slinging: it is analogous to those who would call foes of the amendment 'gay lovers.'

"In 1996, President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act. It denies federal recognition to same-sex marriages and allows states the right to deny recognition of gay marriages that have been performed in other states. Only 14 senators voted against this bill, and Senator Kennedy was one of them. Thus, his proclaimed opposition to gay marriage is nothing but an empty gesture: he refuses to do anything that would protect the institution of marriage from legislative or judicial tinkering.

"In the last election, all 11 states that had same-sex

marriage on the ballot voted against it, including states with a 'progressive' reputation like Oregon. Moreover, more than 80 percent of the states have passed Defense of Marriage Acts. Mr. Kennedy, who is Catholic, should know that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is in favor of a constitutional amendment. And Black ministers, like Bishop Harry Jackson of the High Impact Leadership Coalition, have rallied in favor of the amendment. Even in New York City, surveys show the people don't want same-sex marriage. Are all these people bigots, Mr. Kennedy?

"Reasonable people may disagree whether a constitutional amendment is the right remedy, but only fanatics will call those who support it bigots."