

February 2012

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## Same Facts, Different Conclusions

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed? --Amos 3:3*

**O**ne would like to think that when the moving van loads the last stick of the Gregoire family furniture and pulls away from the Governor's Mansion next January, it will bring to an end a very troublesome era for social conservatives. But experience informs us otherwise. We know there is more to come because just two weeks ago, Gov. Gregoire signed a landmark bill that drives a stake into the heart of marriage, the world's second best social stabilizer. What will be left behind in January is a social hand grenade. What will be missing is the pin.

The new "Marriage Equality Law," not only elevates peculiar and unseemly two-person relationships by granting them parity with one-man-one-woman marriages, it also invites a broad scale shakedown of religious, charitable, commercial, and private interests that for reasons of conscience, cannot or will not be party to mock marriages.

Family-friendly opponents of the landmark social-upheaval measure know that somebody must do something, and do it quickly!

Rising to the challenge, are two capable, but as yet, separate coalitions, each consisting of one or more conservative lawmakers plus several family-friendly organizations. Their objective is simple. Take down the new same-sex "marriage" law.

Here is where it gets a little confusing. One group is "Preserve Marriage Washington," and the other is "Protect Marriage Washington." With us so far?

The troops at "**Preserve** Marriage Washington," are persuaded that a *referendum* offers the best opportunity for a win at the ballot box while organizers at "**Protect** Marriage Washington," feel led to go all-out with an *initiative* to the people. One might say that both groups attest to the facts-in-evidence, but, as to a specific course of action, they have drawn different conclusions. Let's see if we can break it down for you.

**PRESERVE MARRIAGE WASHINGTON** ([www.preservemarriagewashington.com](http://www.preservemarriagewashington.com)) is going forward with a referendum, officially registered with the State as Referendum 74. Referendums are used to refer a law passed by the Legislature to a vote of the people. Lawmakers can attach a referendum clause to a bill—called a *referendum bill*, or citizens can gather requisite signatures on a petition (*referendum measure*) to put a temporary hold on a new law until voters address the issue at the next general election.

A referendum measure this election cycle, requires not-less-than 120,577 signatures of legally registered voters (constituting four percent of the number of votes cast for the office of governor at the last regular gubernatorial election).

*Preserve Marriage Washington* believes that a referendum on same-sex “marriage” can be more easily presented to voters in November with a simple “*Approve*” or “*Reject*.” If the repugnant new law is rejected by voters it simply disappears from the books. No trip to the court house. Case closed.

*Preserve Marriage Washington* has enlisted help from the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), a multi-state group that has led successful campaigns in other states on behalf of traditional marriage, including California’s recent Prop 8.

According to the *Preserve Marriage Washington* web site:

“The mission of Preserve Marriage Washington is to qualify a referendum to the November 2012 ballot giving voters the right to approve or reject SB 6239 which seeks to redefine marriage. The coalition advocates that voters reject redefining marriage, because marriage is a unique institution that is profoundly in the common good. Marriage not only unites a couple to each other, it unites the couple to any children that may be born of their union. While death and divorce too often prevent it, children have a right to know and be cared for by their own mother and father, the people responsible for bringing them into the world.”

The other seasoned coalition, **PROTECT MARRIAGE WASHINGTON** ([www.protectmarriagewa.com](http://www.protectmarriagewa.com)), is undertaking a parallel effort to roll back same-sex “marriage” by way of initiative. Initiatives propose new laws originating “from the people” and require two-times more signatures than a referendum.

Core leaders of *Protect Marriage Washington*, sponsored R-71 several years ago, a close but unsuccessful campaign to repeal the so-called “Everything But Marriage” law. This time out, they have formally filed *Initiative 1192*, which, if approved, would amend the Defense of Marriage Act, requiring the state to recognize only marriages consisting of “one man and one woman.” Like pollster Frank Luntz, *Protect Marriage Washington* thinks laws should clearly say what they mean and mean what they say.

*Initiative 1192* backers see no problem with R-74. They just happen to be of the opinion that their option enhances the case for traditional marriage. A preliminary statement on the *Protect Marriage Washington* web site says:

“Protect Marriage Washington is dedicated to the idea that society is best served for the family and community when the marriage relationship is defined as: Marriage= One Man + One Woman  
I-1192 has been filed for the purpose of reclaiming this definition of marriage. We encourage you and your friends to sign this petition so that we can bring the issue to the citizens for a vote!”

The downside of Initiative 1192 as we see it, is that its success appears to be hinged to R-74. If R-74 is defeated, I-1192 either becomes immediately invalid or winds up at the 9<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit and gets tossed out.

Assuming both measures go forward, and allowing a 25 percent cushion for invalid signatures, *Preserve Marriage Washington* and **Protect Marriage Washington** will together need to rustle up nearly 452,000 signatures in the next 90 days. No small order.

At the moment, both “bands of brothers” are well-intentioned, but, unfortunately, not well-aligned. While we have close friends in both camps, we find no place of comfort in between. It is our opinion that the most immediate task before us is to stop the insidious new same-sex “marriage” law dead in its tracks before the first gay marriage can occur on June 7. **Referendum 74** can do this—I-1192 cannot. For that reason alone, we will commit our time, our energy, and our resources to insure that R-74 has enough signatures by June 6 to stay the new gay marriage law until voters throw it out in November.

It might help to think of the pending same-sex “marriage” law as wet cement. The longer it stands, the harder it gets. Let’s get to work.

*Rick Forcier*