



## Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage

COMMITTEE ON LAITY, MARRIAGE, FAMILY LIFE AND YOUTH

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February 28, 2014

Senator Ted Cruz  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cruz,

As the Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, I write in strong support of your bill, S. 2024, the State Marriage Defense Act of 2014.

Various agencies of the Executive Branch – most recently the Department of Justice by order of Attorney General Holder – have decided to use a “place of celebration” rule rather than a “place of domicile” rule when determining the validity of a marriage for purposes of federal rights, benefits, and privileges. In addition to the Department of Justice, these agencies include, among others, the Internal Revenue Service, Office of Personnel Management, Department of Defense, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security.

By employing a “place of celebration” rule, these agencies have chosen to ignore the law of the state in which people reside in determining whether they are married. The effect, if not the intent, of this choice is to circumvent state laws defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The Supreme Court's decision last year in *United States v. Windsor*, however, requires the federal government to *defer* to state marriage law, not disregard it. Your bill would remedy this problem by requiring the federal government, consistent with *Windsor*, to defer to the marriage law of the state in which people actually reside when determining whether they are married for purposes of federal law.

I am, therefore, very pleased to support the State Marriage Defense Act of 2014 and urge your colleagues to join S. 2024 as cosponsors. Marriage needs to be preserved and strengthened, not redefined. Every just effort to stand for the unique meaning of marriage is worthy of support. Thank you for introducing in the Senate this needed bill.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone  
Archbishop of San Francisco  
Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage