



Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage

COMMITTEE ON LAITY, MARRIAGE, FAMILY LIFE AND YOUTH

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February 11, 2015

Representative Randy Weber
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Weber,

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, H.R. 824, the State Marriage Defense Act of 2015.

Various agencies of the Executive Branch have begun using 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.

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 2013 decision 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 2015 and urge your colleagues to join H.R. 824 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 House this needed bill.

Sincerely,

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