

Christian Leaders Outraged by Iowa's Gay Marriage Ruling



April 3, 2009 – Christian leaders were outraged by the Iowa Supreme Court's unanimous decision today to strike down the state's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which made Iowa the third state to legalize gay marriage.

"Once again a small handful of justices have forced on the people that which they never have asked for," said Jim Garlow, senior pastor of California-based Skyline Church, which was instrumental in overturning the gay marriage ruling enacted by their state's highest court last year. "Iowans are too good a people to tolerate the institution of marriage being sabotaged by the radical left."

Friday's early morning ruling stated that the act, passed in 1998 by a majority of Iowa voters, was unconstitutional because it violated the equal protection principles in the state's constitution.

In the court's opinion, it affirmed that although DOMA was "supported by strong and deep-seated traditional beliefs and popular opinion" the justices had to override that "belief" to maintain consistency with the law.

"The Iowa marriage law was simple, settled, and overwhelmingly supported by Iowans. There was simply no legitimate reason for the court to redefine marriage," said Douglas Napier, a Christian attorney and senior counsel for Alliance Defense Fund. "The court stepped outside of its proper role of interpreting the law and has instead overruled the will of the people and created new law."

Today's court case, *Varnum v. Brien*, has been making its way

to the high court since 2005, when six same-sex couples filed suit because the county's registrar denied them marriage licenses, citing the state's DOMA legislation as their reason. In August 2007, the Polk County district court ruled that the registrar could not deny the same-sex couples marriages licenses. Last December oral arguments for the case were heard at the supreme court level.

Today's decision makes Iowa the third U.S. state following Massachusetts and Connecticut to allow for gay marriage. California's court also ruled in favor of gay

marriage last year, but a majority of the electorate overturned that ruling in the highly publicized Proposition 8 vote.

"I suspect the people of Iowa will rise up and speak and we'll see a constitutional amendment passed there in that state," Garlow told *Charisma*.

Garlow says that Christians in Iowa and across the nation must ban together to see that the ruling is struck down by a vote of the people.

"Praying, educating and organizing is going to have to be the order of the day," he said. "We found [in California] that we had to do a 40-day fast.

"I do not think we would have won it with out tens of thousands of Californian's doing a 40-day fast," he added. "There's a price to be paid, but it's worth it."

Religious leaders say that Christians must fight the Iowa ruling because the nation's moral direction remains in the balance.

"What is a stake is quit frankly the future of western civilization," Garlow said. "As

goes marriage so goes a culture. And this is not something we

can afford to stand by and watch or allow the radical left to stand by and tamper with.”

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, a traditional marriage activist organization said that Iowans must quickly contact their state representatives and urge them to put this decision to a statewide vote.

“We hope the legislature will heed the powerful swell of statewide support for an amendment and reclaim from the high court its rightful place as the state’s policy making body,” Perkins said. “That’s the only sure way to protect the institution of marriage from radical social engineering by state judges.”