

There Is No Justification for a Conservative Senator to Sign the ‘Respect for Marriage’ Act

Read Time: 5 Minutes, 20 Seconds

Why would 12 Republican senators vote in favor of a bill which “provides statutory authority for same-sex and interracial marriages”? How could almost 25% of all Republican senators agree to back this?

The issue, of course, is not their backing of interracial marriages. No major leader with any credibility or respected platform is saying such marriages should not be recognized by law. In fact, it is misleading even to put interracial marriages, which contain the fundamental building blocks of marriage and family, namely a man and a woman, in the same category as same-sex “marriages,” which by definition omit either the man or the woman.

Rejection of interracial marriages is a matter of bigotry, not biology.

The issue is these Republican leaders offering their names in support of these same-sex unions. What could possibly motivate them?

In the words of Sen. Mitt Romney, one of the aforementioned 12 and himself a devout Mormon, “This legislation provides important protections for religious liberty—measures which are particularly important to protect the religious freedoms of our faith-based institutions. I appreciate the efforts of Senators Baldwin, Collins and others to address this concern, and heartily support their legislation.

“While I believe in traditional marriage, Obergefell is and has been the law of the land upon which LGBTQ individuals have relied. This legislation provides certainty to many LGBTQ Americans, and it signals that Congress—and I—esteem and love all of our fellow Americans equally.”

Put another way, since same-sex “marriage” is already the law of the land, we might as well put all our efforts into ensuring religious freedoms, which the Obergefell decision made quite tenuous.

Similarly, Sen. Joni Ernst said, “After hearing directly from Iowans and closely reviewing the amended language, I believe this bill protects religious freedoms and will simply maintain the status quo in Iowa.”

Other Republican backers echoed similar sentiments, with Sen. Lisa Murkowski stating that, “I have long supported marriage equality and believe all lawful marriages deserve respect. I thank my colleagues who improved the bill’s protections for religious liberty and continued prohibitions on polygamy, allowing it to move forward this week. All Americans deserve dignity, respect and equal protection under the law.”

But it is one thing for Murkowski, who affirms the validity of same-sex “marriage,” to support this bill. It is another thing for a Mormon or a professing Christian conservative, such as Sen. Joni Ernst, to support this bill, since it more deeply enshrines these same-sex unions in our nation and, according to many, does not truly protect our religious liberties.

To quote from the bill directly, “Specifically, the bill repeals and replaces provisions that define, for purposes of federal law, marriage as between a man and a woman and spouse as a person of the opposite sex with provisions that recognize any marriage that is valid under state law. . . .”

Read those words again and ask yourself: If you are a God-fearing Bible-believer, could you vote yes to a statement like

that?

“The bill also repeals and replaces provisions that do not require states to recognize same-sex marriages from other states with provisions that prohibit the denial of full faith and credit or any right or claim relating to out-of-state marriages on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity or national origin. . . .”

How on earth could any Bible-affirming individual put his or her name to that statement?

The NRB (National Religious Broadcasters) expressed its “grave disappointment in the decision of 12 Senate Republicans to vote to advance the so-called ‘Respect for Marriage Act,’ which breaks with the traditional definition of marriage that has sustained the American family for generations and undermines religious groups, including our members, who dissent in speech or in practice.”

Said NRB President & CEO Troy A. Miller, “In America today, the ability to obtain a same-sex marriage is not in jeopardy. The ability to do business or speak to the culture while holding to traditional values about life, marriage and family is very much under threat. These are part and parcel of the First Amendment freedoms that NRB exists to defend.”

Less stridently, Patrick T. Brown wrote on Newsweek that the “Republicans and conservatives should offer a hearty ‘mazel tov’ when our LGBT brothers and sisters opt for a lifetime of fidelity, commitment and companionship. . . .

“But the institution of marriage itself—in law, custom and tradition—is intimately bound up with the act of creating and raising children. Marriage, at its core, is the social institution most fundamentally oriented towards procreation. It is society’s way of harnessing, binding and supporting the relationship that creates a new life, and it gives the child produced from that union (and his or her parents) the best

chance at a stable life.”

Exactly so. And the reason that the government recognizes and conveys benefits on marriage is because marriage conveys benefits on the society, namely (and as a rule), the natural ability for a husband and wife to bring children into the world and to join them to their biological parents. (For my debate on this subject, see [here](#).)

Otherwise, why does the government even get involved in the institution of marriage? Why are there tax benefits? It’s because of what marriage, as intended by God and biology, can do.

As for same-sex couples, I know my words sound awful and hateful.

The reality is that I make no judgment on their love for each other, their faithfulness to each other or their desire to be good parents. To the contrary, I’m sure that there are many same-sex couples who are models of love and fidelity and many same-sex parents who are models of devotion and sacrifice.

I’m simply saying their unions are not truly marriages in God’s sight, that they violate the intent of our biological design, that the best mother is not a father (and vice versa), and that our courts and our government have no business redefining marriage, let alone punishing those of us who cannot affirm these unions in good conscience before God and the world.

And even if this bill did protect religious liberties (which critics of the bill, like Sen. Mike Lee, categorically say it does not), it is wrong to do so at the expense of affirming that which cannot be affirmed. (Lee said that the bill “labels people of good faith as bigots and subjects them to endless harassing litigation and discrimination and threats by that same government that was founded to protect their religious liberty.”)

It is therefore a terrible shame that 12 Republican senators joined together with their Democratic counterparts in voting to advance this bill for a vote. As for the Democrats, it is further proof of how far they have come from the days when President Clinton said (in 1996), "I remain opposed to same-sex marriage. I believe marriage is an institution for the union of a man and a woman. This has been my long-standing position, and it is not being reviewed or considered." (For his changed views by 2013, see [here](#).)

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