

Views: Don't Amend the Constitution

S.A. FISHBURN

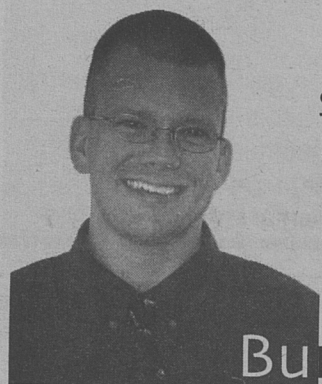
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Since President Bush was elected to the White House he has made many changes, some substantial, some not. Soon, however, President Bush will be proposing quite possibly the most ludicrous edict ever brought before the country. The president is proposing an amendment to the sacred document that is the Constitution that will prohibit same-sex marriage.

The proposed amendment would soil the sanctity that is the constitution. The 200-year-old document has been amended many a time over the years and in doing so it has shaped a nation. While every amendment is important, some outshine others – the first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights; the 13th Amendment, outlawing slavery; the 15th Amendment extending the right to vote to all (male) citizens without regard to skin color or “previous condition of servitude”; the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote; and the 26th Amendment, lowering the voting age to 18.

As some of the most important amendments to the United States Constitution, they uphold the dignity of the country while sustaining the freedoms of the people. Right now there are 27 constitutional amendments.

The proposed marriage amendment, however, would lack the elegance, but more importantly, the freedoms that the ones of yesteryear provided. The “28th” amendment would take liberties away from a moderately large group of people simply because of what some would argue was the way they were born. Many people believe that people are homosexual upon birth; if so they would fall under the category of “unalterable minority,” such as gender and skin color.

If homosexual people cannot help the way they are, would the 28th amendment be any different than an amendment allowing prejudice because of skin color, or nationality? It is attacking something they have no control over, and singling out and allowing discrimination for an entire group of people, something never before put in the constitution.

Another factor is how preposterous the amendment would appear, how it would be worded: “We the people of the United States of America prohibit marriage in any form other than man-women because we think it’s icky.” There isn’t any way to create an amendment without broadcasting our prejudice. There is

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also the problem of this generating a domino effect, which could be devastating.

If 2004 is the year that America decides it’s okay to openly discriminate against homosexuals, what will happen next? Will 2005 be the year we decide that those of the Jewish faith are second-class citizens? What about Muslims, or

people more freedom; there are very few if any circumstances in which this will cost jobs. In short, this issue does not directly or even indirectly affect most of the people protesting against it, which makes you wonder why they are actually protesting in the first place.

The leading argument for the 28th amendment is that it will be protecting the sanctity of traditional marriage. Marriage has never really been the “pure holy union” that it has been made out to be. In the days when the church had influence over nearly every facet of the civilized world, it sent out two messages that founded marriage: “You can’t have sex unless you are married, and you may only be married to one woman.”

If politicians really are in this merely to protect marriage, two questions beg to be asked. The first

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African Americans, or even vegetarians? In 2005 will we say that vegetarians can only eat in certain restaurants? Women must sleep in separate buildings from men? If we don’t stop this now it may run wild.

Many Americans are outraged at the idea of gay marriage despite it being a minor issue at best. I have a personal philosophy that I believe is applicable in many political situations: “Does this issue affect me? My friends/loved ones? Does it endanger the lives of people? Does it threaten the environment? Will it raise the price of gasoline? Will it cost jobs? Will it hurt the economy? Will it upset a political balance? Will it hurt people? Does it threaten the liberties of people?” For most people the answer to every question in this case is no.

Gay marriage will not kill people; it will create a boost to the marriage industry, thus helping the economy. It will give a group of

is if they would support an anti-divorce amendment. It appears that divorce is the bigger threat to marriage. Fifty percent of all marriages end in divorce, which is freedom to women in abusive marriages. As early as one hundred years ago the only easy way out of a marriage was the eventual death of one member of the marriage. It was either die or wait for him to die.

The other question is how politicians can be the ones to define marriages when they can’t even get their own to work. Many politicians have had affairs: Strom Thurman’s mistress gave birth to his daughter of African descent; Thomas Jefferson had an affair with his African slave who also gave birth to illegitimate children; and of course there’s the infamous “Monica-gate.” With so much infidelity within Washington throughout history, it is obvious that the politicians certainly aren’t the ones to tell us >>

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