



Countering the Deception

Responding to Allegations
About the Marriage
Protection Amendment

by: Alysse ElHage

HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVISTS ARE USING INFLAMMATORY LANGUAGE LIKE “ANTI-GAY, DISCRIMINATORY, RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY, HARMFUL” TO MISCHARACTERIZE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD SIMPLY GIVE NORTH CAROLINIANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE ON ADDING THE HISTORICAL DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION. EVEN BEFORE THE INK WAS DRY ON THE MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT (MPA) LEGISLATION, SB 106—DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE, WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE EIGHTH YEAR IN A ROW IN FEBRUARY, HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVISTS ACROSS THE STATE HAVE BEEN ON THE OFFENSE. LED BY EQUALITY NORTH CAROLINA, AND EMPOWERED BY THEIR NATIONAL ALLIES, THEY HAVE LAUNCHED A TARGETED CAMPAIGN TO SPREAD MISINFORMATION ABOUT THE MPA AND ITS SUPPORTERS. THIS INCLUDES EQUALITY NC’S RECEIPT OF A \$10,000 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL HOMOSEXUAL ADVOCACY GROUP, THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN, TO HELP WITH ITS EFFORTS TO “KEEP A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT OFF THE BALLOT” IN NORTH CAROLINA.¹

It is no coincidence that the nation’s largest homosexual advocacy group would involve itself in a campaign to prevent North Carolinians from voting on adding the definition of marriage to the State Constitution. Homosexual activists have made no secret of the fact that the redefinition of marriage is number one on their social agenda. They know that the MPA has been approved by the majority of voters in every other state where the definition of marriage has been on the ballot, and they want to ensure that North Carolina retains its unflattering distinction as the *only* Southern state without such an amendment.²

With an urgency that so far has not been matched by battle-weary pro-family citizens, Equality NC and its allies have launched a 20,000 plus post-card campaign,³ hosted town hall meetings across the state,⁴ erected 14 billboards that equate support for the MPA with bigotry,⁵ and lobbied lawmakers—with a constant barrage of emotionally-charged misinformation about the purpose and impact of the MPA. The false accusations from homosexual activists about the MPA include: that it represents an “attack” on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people; that it is a form of “discrimination;” that it is rooted in “religion-based bigotry;” and even that it would “harm LGBT youth.” Each one of these outlandish claims is part of a powerful strategy the homosexual “rights” movement has employed for years. These accusations also highlight the very heart of the homosexual agenda, which is total societal acceptance of homosexuality, bisexuality and transgenderism, and show why the redefinition of marriage is its main target.

LGBT Strategy: Portraying Homosexuals as Victims

Before some of the most popular accusations against the MPA are addressed, it is helpful to first identify the strategy behind the misinformation about the MPA. LGBT activists are intentionally using the terms, “anti-gay,” “discriminatory,” “bigotry,” and “harmful” as part of a strategic tool that has been successfully employed by the homosexual rights movement since its inception.⁶ The “victim imagery” strategy was first detailed in the 1989 “gay manifesto,” *After the Ball*. The book’s authors, gay activists Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, explain:

“In any campaign to win over the public, gays must be portrayed as victims in need of protection so that straights will be inclined by reflex to adopt the role of protector... The purpose of victim imagery is to make straights feel very uncomfortable; that is to jam with shame, the self-righteous pride that would ordinarily accompany and reward their antigay belligerence, and to lay the groundwork for the process of conversion by helping straights identify with gays and sympathize with their underdog status.”⁷

LGBT activists in North Carolina and nationally have successfully used this strategy to convince the public, lawmakers, and the media that LGBT

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individuals are the disproportionate “victims” of hate crimes, discrimination in employment and housing, bullying at school, and are in need of special protections.

School Safety. In 2009, this strategy was the key to the successful passage of the “School Violence Prevention Act,” also known as the “anti-bullying” law, which was sponsored by lesbian and former State Senator Julia Boseman (D–New Hanover). During debate over the bill, lawmakers were inundated with testimony from and stories about LGBT-identified students who had been bullied by their peers at school.⁸ While supporters of the law promoted it as a necessary defense against school bullying, it inserted the undefined terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” into North Carolina

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law for the first time, and opened the door for the promotion of homosexuality in schools under the guise of promoting “safety.”⁹

Civil Rights. This same strategy is also used in ongoing efforts to get the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” recognized as protected classes in nondiscrimination laws and policies, as well as with laws and policies dealing with hate crimes (*for more on this, see our article, Connecting the Dots of the Homosexual Agenda*).¹⁰ As the examples in this article will show, when it comes to the issue of marriage, LGBT activists have used the “victim imagery” strategy to their advantage, by arguing that denying them the “right” to marry demotes them to “second-class” citizens, represents an “attack” on their community, and causes them “harm.”

As the most popular accusations against the MPA and its supporters are considered, it is important to remember how each one fits into this “victim imagery” strategy. Each accusation is intended to not only negatively portray the MPA and those who support it, but also to promote the misperception that LGBT individuals are victims who deserve special rights. The goal of this strategy goes beyond simply defeating the MPA; it is ultimately aimed at forcing complete acceptance of homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism upon society.

Four Allegations

To counter the misinformation that is being circulated by LGBT activists and their allies about the MPA, each charge must be directly addressed and answered with the facts. Following are four of the most frequently used arguments against the MPA, and an in-depth discussion of each one.

1. “THE MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT IS ANTI-LGBT, AND REPRESENTS AN ATTACK ON LGBT NORTH CAROLINIANS.”

“Call SB 106/HB 777 what they are: ‘the anti-LGBT amendment’ or ‘the anti-gay amendment.’ It’s not about ‘defending anyone’s marriage.’ It’s an attack on LGBT North Carolinians.”¹¹
—From Equality NC’s “Fact Sheet” on the MPA legislation.

RESPONSE: Nothing about the MPA is anti-homosexual, and it certainly does not represent an “attack” on LGBT individuals. It is a pro-marriage amendment with the sole intention of preserving and promoting the historic definition of marriage as a public institution that binds men and women together to create the best environment for raising children. If the MPA is *anti-anything*, it is aimed at defending North Carolina’s marriage laws against the homosexual agenda.

It is helpful to first look at the simple language of the proposed Marriage Protection Amendment, which states: “*Marriage between a man and a woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this state.*”¹² In brief, the MPA would ensure that only marriage between a man and a woman will be recognized as legally valid in North Carolina. It would also protect the institution of marriage from being stripped of its core meaning and purpose through the implementation of domestic partnerships or civil unions, which are essentially “marriage” without the name and represent backdoor attempts to legalize same-sex unions. In other states where civil unions laws have been enacted, specifically in Vermont, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, the laws eventually helped pave the way for the enactment of same-sex “marriage” (SSM).¹³

All the MPA would do is protect the definition of marriage that is already in state law from being redefined by either activist judges or politicians. It is no more anti-gay than marriage itself. However, the charge that the MPA represents an “attack” on LGBT individuals should not be taken lightly, because it represents an attempt to use the “victim strategy” to conceal the real aggressors in this ongoing battle for marriage.

The Real Aggressors. The MPA is simply a *defense* against an attack on marriage that is being waged by homosexual activists and their allies, who are seeking to redefine marriage in every state in this nation. They have so far been successful in six states (Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Iowa and most recently New York) plus the District of Columbia.¹⁴ Additionally, eight states (most recently Delaware) have enacted laws that legalize either civil unions or domestic partnerships, which extend most or all of the legal rights and benefits of marriage to homosexual couples (*this number does not include states, such as Vermont, where civil unions were replaced by SSM*).¹⁵ LGBT activists are also attacking the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as between a man and a woman for federal purposes, and protects states, such as North Carolina, from being forced to recognize the same-sex “marriages” of another state where the practice is legal. If the federal DOMA is ultimately overturned in the courts, the DOMA laws of 37 states, including North Carolina, will be at risk.

North Carolina is not immune to this nationwide attack on marriage. LGBT activists here are engaged in incremental efforts at the state and local levels designed to slowly chip away at laws and/or policies that protect marriage and the family. These efforts include the previously mentioned enactment of the 2009 “School Violence Prevention Act;” the adoption of domestic partnership policies by an increasing number of towns, cities, and counties throughout the state; and efforts to add “sexual orientation” as a protected class to state law and/or local nondiscrimination policies.¹⁶ Laws that include “sexual orientation” and/or “gender identity” as specially protected classes have been cited by the courts in other states—including Connecticut and Iowa—to justify the redefinition of marriage.¹⁷

While LGBT activists have not overtly attacked North Carolina’s marriage laws through a successful lawsuit or the introduction of a bill to legalize same-sex “marriage,” it is only a matter of time before such a lawsuit is filed, or a measure to legalize SSM is introduced in the General Assembly. Without a constitutional amendment preserving marriage, North Carolina is extremely vulnerable to becoming the next target in the movement to redefine marriage.

Remember, LGBT activists brought this battle over marriage to North Carolina, and they continue to work to implement their agenda for marriage here. The MPA is simply a defensive response to the escalating attacks on marriage in the courts, state and local governments, and even schools, and it is critical for preserving marriage for future generations in North Carolina.

2. “THE MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT WILL WRITE DISCRIMINATION INTO THE STATE CONSTITUTION.”

“The bill is meant to write discrimination into North Carolina’s founding document and, with a series of votes, write part of the state’s population out of rights and protections they deserve.”— Equality NC blog post on the MPA.¹⁸

RESPONSE: This is one of LGBT activists’ favorite arguments against the MPA, and one they use often. The term, “discrimination,” immediately creates images in people’s minds of a group of people being unfairly excluded from something that should be open to everyone else. As discussed earlier, this is part of the strategy by the homosexual rights movement to portray LGBT individuals as victims.

First of all, the MPA is about *preservation*, not discrimination. It would simply preserve the definition of marriage that has existed throughout history in the State Constitution, and at the same time make a positive statement about what constitutes a marriage in North Carolina. When LGBT activists argue that the MPA is discriminatory, what they are really saying is that marriage itself—as it has his-

torically been defined—is discriminatory, and this is the claim that must be addressed.

It is true that marriage by definition is an exclusive institution in the sense that is not open to everyone who wants to get married. For example, children cannot get married (there is an age requirement), certain blood relatives cannot get married (such as siblings), and more than two people cannot legally marry (bigamy and polygamy are illegal).

Historically, marriage has been discriminating in the sense that it is a relationship “set apart” and “distinguished” from all other relationships, and for good reason. Marriage is a foundational unit of society that is built upon the complementary male-female union—the only union that can *naturally* create children AND provide the safest family environment for those children to thrive.¹⁹ This is why marriage between men and women has been the norm for every human culture for as far back as historians can trace, even though homosexuality may have existed in these cultures.²⁰ Marriage has also been set apart and protected through law and custom because of the multitude of benefits a healthy marriage culture naturally brings to both individuals and society—including economic, health, educational, and safety benefits for men, women, and children that *no other family form can duplicate*.²¹ This is also why married couples receive special benefits and protections that other human relationships traditionally do not receive.

The argument that the MPA would specifically target and negatively discriminate against homosexual couples is a hollow one. What the MPA actually does is preserve the unique and special understanding of marriage that has existed in nearly every civilization since time began from ongoing attempts to strip it of its core meaning and purpose.



Camera phone picture taken of a billboard on I-440 near the Capital Boulevard exit on May 23, 2011. This billboard and similar ones in Raleigh on I-40 and in Garner on Hwy 70 were taken down before NCFPC staff could return to take a better quality picture.

3. “THE MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT IS A FORM OF RELIGIOUS-BASED BIGOTRY.”

“Do N.C. lawmakers Embrace Religion-Based Bigotry?”—A question on a billboard in Raleigh sponsored by the pro-homosexual group, Faith in America. It is one of 14 similar billboards across the area targeting MPA supporters.²²

“This vicious attack on a gay student is a reminder that a culture that tolerates anti-LGBT hatred under the guise of religious belief has very real, very harmful consequences. When preachers preach that gay people are evil and state legislators advance bills that single out gay people for discrimination, it is no surprise that some will take the next step and use violence to send a message that LGBT people are unwelcome and unworthy of being treated with decency in our state.”— Ian Palmquist, Equality NC’s executive director, in a statement responding to an accusation of a hate crime against a homosexual student at UNC, which later turned out to be false.²³

RESPONSE: LGBT activists consistently use the marriage issue to target and attempt to silence anyone who opposes their radical agenda to normalize sexual and gender confusion. The claim that the MPA is a form of “religious-based bigotry” is not only another example of the “victim imagery” strategy, but it also highlights the threat that same-sex “marriage” poses to religious liberty in free society. Ultimately, the end result of the redefinition of marriage is the silencing of the Church on the Biblical understanding of sex, gender, and the family.

Targeting the Church. For LGBT activists, the number one institution standing in the way of the complete fulfillment of the homosexual agenda is the Church (or more specifically, churches that continue to preach what the Bible says about sex, gender, and the family). For example, the pro-homosexual group, Faith in America, defines “religion-based bigotry” as: “the foundation of anti-gay attitudes in our society and in the minds of some Americans, particularly those who have been exposed to *church teaching* that is interpreted to say that same-sex sexual orientation is immoral or sinful.” The defini-

tion continues, “It is the narrow-mindedness, intolerance and prejudice toward LGBT individuals that results when people allow *certain religious teaching* to be [the] basis for their perception, attitudes and actions toward gay and lesbian people...”²⁴ (Emphasis added.)

SSM in Other Countries. These are harsh words aimed at silencing ministers who simply preach the Bible. The ultimate goal of the homosexual agenda, and the end result of the redefinition of marriage, is the censorship of the Church on the issues of sex, gender, and the family. In countries where same-sex “marriage” is legal, religious freedom and free speech are under attack in the name of promoting the acceptance of homosexuality. Consider the following examples:

- **Sweden (2004):** Pastor Ake Greene was sentenced to one month in jail for a sermon he gave at his church that presented the Biblical view of homosexuality. He was eventually acquitted by Sweden’s Supreme Court.²⁵
- **Canada (2008):** The Alberta Human Rights Commission censored a minister for protesting the homosexual agenda in a letter to a local newspaper. The minister was ordered to pay a fine, apologize, and “cease” speaking out publicly against homosexuality.²⁶ In 2009, the commission’s ruling was overturned by the courts.²⁷
- **Canada (2011):** A popular Canadian sports announcer and Roman Catholic, Damian Goddard, was fired from his job after stating his support for traditional marriage in some posts on his personal Twitter account.²⁸ The incident prompted one Toronto Sun commentator, who supports same-sex “marriage,” to ask in an op-ed: “Do we want to live in a society where, if you don’t believe in something like same-sex marriage because of your faith, you have to be silent for fear of being ridiculed en masse, or for fear of losing your job?”²⁹

Even in countries where same-sex “marriage” is not yet legal, pro-homosexual hate crimes and/or nondiscrimination laws have been used to silence and punish Christians for expressing their religious beliefs about homosexuality. For example, in Scotland, which has a hate crimes law that includes special protections for LGBT individuals, an American Baptist street preacher was arrested in Glasgow in 2010 for publicly stating that homosexuality is a sin in response to some questions from a crowd that had gathered to hear him preach. He spent one night in jail and was fined 1,000 pounds, after pleading guilty to making “homophobic remarks” that were “aggravated by religious prejudice.”³⁰

SSM in the United States. The threat to religious freedom from same-sex “marriage” does not end with censoring the pulpit, nor is it limited to “other” countries. Here in the United States, legal advocates on both sides of the marriage debate have warned

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about the impending conflict between same-sex “marriage” and religious liberty. A 2009 study by The Beckett Fund for Religious Liberty warned that the legalization of same-sex “marriage” would trigger hundreds of state-level anti-discrimination laws that include protections for “sexual orientation.” The report explained that these laws would be used to bring lawsuits against religious individuals and organizations that refuse to: hire gays and lesbians, perform same-sex weddings, or rent their churches or other facilities for that purpose.³¹

In states where same-sex “marriage” is legal, the conflict between same-sex “marriage” and religious freedom is already evident. For example:

- **D.C. (2010):** In 2010, Catholic Charities of DC (where same-sex “marriage” is now legal) handed over its 80-year-old foster care and public adoption program to a national group, rather than comply with a requirement that children be placed with homosexual couples.³²
- **Boston (2006):** Facing similar demands, Catholic Charities of Boston’s adoption program in Massachusetts also chose to close its doors.³³
- **Illinois (2011):** Catholic Charities of Rockford, Illinois, ended its 100 year-old state-funded adoption and foster care services on June 1, 2011, (the same day Illinois’ new civil unions law took effect) to avoid the possibility of having to place children with same-sex couples.³⁴ Additionally, a same-sex couple has reportedly filed complaints with the Illinois Attorney General and the State Department of Human Rights against two innkeepers, who declined to rent their bed and breakfasts to the couple for a civil union ceremony.³⁵

The MPA will help protect the ability of the Church to continue to transmit traditional values about sex, gender, and marriage—including what the Bible says about homosexual activity. These rights are at serious risk because if same-sex “marriage” is legalized in North Carolina—as it eventually will be without the MPA—religious freedom and free speech =will be among the first casualties.

4. “THE MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT IS HARMFUL TO THE CHILDREN OF LGBT INDIVIDUALS AND TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBT.”

“More than a million LGBT teens today are suffering debilitating depression because families, pastors, peers and elected officials promote a societal climate of rejection and condemnation toward them. ... Make no mistake—the proposed anti-gay marriage initiative ... will unleash a torrent of ill-will in North Carolina against children in our schools and homes, parents with gay and lesbian children.”—the pro-homosexual group, Faith in America.³⁶

1: “The MPA is anti-LGBT, and represents an attack on LGBT North Carolinians.”

Response: Nothing about the MPA is anti-homosexual—it is simply a defense against an attack on marriage that is being waged by the REAL AGGRESSORS, homosexual activists and their allies, who are seeking to redefine marriage in every state in this nation.

2: “The MPA will write discrimination into the State Constitution.”

Response: The MPA is about *preservation*, not discrimination. It would preserve the definition of marriage that has existed throughout history in the State Constitution, and at the same time make a positive statement about what constitutes a marriage in North Carolina.

3: “The MPA is a form of religious-based bigotry.”

Response: The MPA is really about protecting the rights to free speech and religious liberty, which, as this accusation shows, are seriously threatened by the legalization of same-sex “marriage.” It will help preserve the ability of the Church to continue to transmit traditional values about sex, gender, and marriage—including what the Bible says about homosexual activity.

4: “The MPA is harmful to the children of LGBT individuals and young people who identify as LGBT.”

Response: The MPA will help to protect *all* children by maintaining the marital norm for society of one man, one woman that has endured for centuries and is backed up by social science evidence because no other family form can provide children what they need to thrive, or duplicate its benefits for individuals and society.

RESPONSE: The claim that the Marriage Protection Amendment would cause harm to young people who identify as LGBT and/or children being raised by same-sex parents is another extreme and dangerous mischaracterization of the measure. Once again, this argument is an example of the “victim imagery” strategy. The intent is to cause North Carolinians to feel guilty for holding traditional values about sex, gender, and marriage, and for wanting to ensure that those values continue to be the norm for future generations.

It is true that LGBT youth have higher rates of both depression and suicide attempts than their peers, but is it fair or even logical to blame those who support traditional marriage for this fact, or to claim that a MPA would increase the risk of harm for these children? A good way to answer this question is to look at data on LGBT youth in a state, such as Massachusetts, where same-sex “marriage” has been legal since 2003. The Massachusetts Department of Education has been following the health of LGBT youth for over a decade, using the annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³⁷

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The YRBS data from Massachusetts reveal two important facts about LGBT youth. First, it shows that LGBT youth in Massachusetts also suffer higher rates of a number of risk factors associated with higher rates of depression and suicide. For example, LGBT youth are more likely than their peers to: become sexually active before age 13, have experienced dating violence, and to report forced sexual contact.³⁸ Additionally, LGBT youth in Massachusetts are more likely to report using illegal drugs, and to either become pregnant or get someone else pregnant.³⁹ Each one of these risk factors on its own is associated with higher rates of depression and suicide, but when combined are certainly more likely to contribute to the higher suicide risk among LGBT youth than the age-old definition of marriage.

Secondly, it is helpful to compare the suicidal behavior among LGBT youth in Massachusetts in the years before same-sex “marriage” was legalized in 2003 to the most recent data. If what LGBT activists claim is true—that societal disapproval of same-sex “marriage” and the normalization of homosexuality are responsible for the high rates of depression and suicide among LGBT youth—then one would expect the suicide rates among LGBT youth to have dropped significantly in states, like Massachusetts, where same-sex “marriage” is legal. But according to the YRBS data from Massachusetts, this is not the case at all. For example:

- In 2001, LGBT youth in Massachusetts were nearly four times as likely to have attempted suicide as their peers (31 percent vs. 8 percent).⁴⁰
- In 2009, six years after same-sex “marriage” was legalized, LGBT youth in Massachusetts were “over four times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year” than their peers (24.7 percent vs. 5.6 percent).⁴¹

As the YRBS data on LGBT youth in Massachusetts show, there are a number of risk factors that may be contributing to the higher rates of depression and suicide among LGBT youth, ranging from early sexual activity and sexual abuse to drug and alcohol use. The legalization of same-sex “marriage” does not appear to have improved the emotional health or physical wellbeing of these students.

Preserving the historic definition of marriage as only between a man and a woman will not cause harm to any child. The MPA will convey a positive

message about marriage that has endured for centuries because it is as true today as it was thousands of years ago. Despite society’s ever-changing cultural dynamics, one simple, yet powerful truth remains, and is backed up by social science evidence: Only the marital union of a man and a woman provides children with the father and a mother they need to thrive. A vast body of research involving children from broken homes—where one biological parent is missing—has found that children do best when raised by their married, biological parents.⁴² Just because other broken family forms exist—from single-mothers to same-sex parents—does not mean that the marital norm for society should be redefined in order to keep the children in these families from feeling different. In a broken world, not every family will reflect the marital ideal of one man and one woman, but this should remain the norm for future generations because no other family form can provide children with all they need to thrive, or duplicate its benefits for individuals and society.

The Real Harm—Same-Sex “Marriage”

The reason LGBT activists are so busy accusing MPA supporters of bigotry, discrimination, and hatred is that they want to conceal the *real threat* that same-sex “marriage” poses to North Carolina. The legalization of same-sex “marriage” involves redefining society’s core institution—the family—where little girls and boys learn what it means to be women and men, and where the norms about sex, gender, and marriage are shaped for future generations. What happens to marriage will ultimately impact what children learn in schools about these core issues, and interfere with parental rights to raise their children according to their own values, and not the values of LGBT activists. The redefinition of marriage will also strip *all* citizens of their rights to religious freedom and free speech—resulting in the silencing of anyone who dares to publicly express traditional values about sexuality, gender, and the family.

As the marriage debate continues to escalate in North Carolina, a lot of statements—both true and false—will be made about the MPA, and traditional marriage supporters will no doubt continue to be targeted by LGBT activists. In the face of these attacks, it is important for pro-family citizens to remember the “victim imagery” strategy behind these false accusations, and to respond with both compassion *and* truth. The Marriage Protection Amendment is *not* an attack on LGBT individuals or their families, nor is it an attempt to demote them to “second class” citizens. It is really about one thing: preserving the historic understanding of sexuality, gender, and the family in North Carolina, and protecting the right of parents and the Church to transmit traditional values about these core issues to the next generation. ❖

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ENDNOTES

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