



NEW YORK STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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NEWS

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Paterson's unilateral action on same-sex 'marriage' bypasses the will of the people's elected representatives

New York State Catholic Conference Executive Director Richard E. Barnes made the following statement today in response to Governor Paterson's unilateral decision to recognize same-sex "marriage" in the state:

"The administrative action by Gov. Paterson compelling all state agencies to recognize same-sex 'marriages' performed in other states is an unwelcome bypassing of the state legislature. Unfortunately, this unilateral move without legislative input is not in keeping with Mr. Paterson's promises upon taking office of a collaborative and bipartisan governing style.

"As we have said many times, the definition of marriage pre-dates recorded history. No single politician or court or legislature should attempt to redefine the very building block of our society in a way that alters its entire meaning and purpose. The state has a compelling interest in holding up marriage between one man and one woman as the societal model. What our biblical ancestors knew instinctively holds true today: Marriage between a man and a woman is the best way to assure the stable rearing of children and the flourishing of society. It should not be treated as simply one more lifestyle choice, equal to any other, because it is not.

"Homosexual men and women must be treated with dignity by all. In cases where unjust discrimination occurs, it must be remedied. However, just as the state cannot declare a man to be a 'mother' or a woman to be a 'father,' it can not declare a same-sex union to be a 'marriage.' To use a distinctly New York expression, 'It is what it is.' "

The Catholic Conference represents New York State's Bishops in matters of public policy.

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