

Constitutional Amendment to ban same sex marriage MN Senate Hearing

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Testimony by Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker, Mount Zion Temple

Chairman Limmer, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify today. After I introduce myself I have two points that I will make.

I am Rabbi Adam Spilker, rabbi of Mount Zion Temple here in St. Paul on Summit Avenue, a 155 year old congregation, the oldest Jewish synagogue in the upper Midwest. I cannot speak on behalf of all of my 700 families but I do have a clear sense that the vast majority are opposed to this amendment, but I can speak on behalf of the Minnesota Rabbinical Association, comprised of the rabbis who represent the majority of Jews in Minnesota, and was asked to speak for the JCRC, Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas whose board has historically voted to oppose this constitutional amendment.

And as part of my introduction, I am proud to say that the first same-sex union that my wife and I had the honor to co-officiate for was in 2003. My wife is also a member of the clergy at Mount Zion. We have been married for 19 years, fourteen of them here in Minnesota while serving our congregation.

Point 1: Two weeks ago, right before Passover, the Jewish holiday of freedom and equality, Jews read the same text in synagogues around the world that included Leviticus Chapter 18, verse 22. "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman....."

When these words were first uttered some 3000 years ago, my ancestors living in the Ancient Near East clearly made a certain sexual act forbidden.

And because my time is short, I'll make this brief and clear: My ancestors did not forbid a loving, committed same-sex relationship with this verse. Why?

Because they had never seen one.

Marriage was arranged at a young age and therefore they outlawed anything that would break up the only marriage they understood, heterosexual marriage.

Today, when many are getting married a little later in life than in the ancient world, in 30s if they are lucky, they have time to understand their true, God-given nature and form committed relationships, the majority of which are heterosexual and a minority of which are homosexual.

And this brings me to point 2: Alexis de Tocqueville came to America in 1832 and warned about the tyranny of the majority. There are clearly faithful religious views on both sides of the issue of marriage. To put morality to an up or down

vote on the 2012 ballot is to risk the majority imposing their religious views on the minority.

I will defend the right of my fellow clergy in the state to marry or not to marry whomever they choose.

This is part of the religious freedom of America *and it should stay in the realm of religion.*

But in the public square, there needs to be a secular reason to outlaw something. What is that secular reason?

A marriage amendment will further divide our state. It is a move in the wrong direction.

Wrong for justice.

Wrong for my belief of God's love and mercy.

Wrong for Minnesota.

Thank you.