Catholic Action League of Massachusetts

NEWS RELEASE

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FRIENDS OF IRELAND WARN OF DANGERS TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN YES VOTE ON MARRIAGE REFERENDUM

Pro-Life and Pro-Family friends of Ireland in the United States today are sending a message of caution to the Irish people about the potential dangers to religious freedom in the Irish Republic, which could result from a change in the traditional definition of marriage. Irish citizens will vote in a referendum on Friday, May 22nd on whether to permit two persons of the same gender to contract marriage.

"The progress of same gender marriage in the United States has produced serious and troubling consequences for religious freedom in America, including limitations on free speech, discrimination against Catholics and other religious believers, and state sponsored coercion, characterized by harshly punitive measures against Christians and others who refuse to violate their consciences in this matter," the signatories said in a statement released earlier today.

"Among the examples of injustice directed at those who support the perennial understanding of marriage are the following:

1. Printers, photographers, bakers, florists, innkeepers and others have been the objects of lawsuits by homosexuals, and investigations, resulting in fines---some as high as $150,000---and other civil penalties, by administrative law, government enforcement agencies, for refusing to service same gender marriage ceremonies;

2. The Solicitor General of the United States, in arguments before the U. S. Supreme Court, admitted that religiously affiliated institutions, such as schools and charities, could lose their tax exempt status if they refuse to recognize same gender unions as marriages;

3. Military and naval chaplains have faced warnings and disciplinary proceedings, for counseling members of the Armed Forces that homosexual behavior is sinful;

4. In Massachusetts, a federal judge has ruled that public schools must instruct the children attending them, without parental notification or consent, that same gender marriage is the equivalent of traditional marriage;

5. In states where same gender marriage has been legalized, employers, including religious employers, must provide spousal benefits to the partners of homosexuals who have contracted civil marriages."

"For three decades now, homosexual activists have portrayed themselves as victims of intolerance who are only seeking to end discrimination and achieve equality. The reality is very different. Wherever the homosexual agenda has prevailed, homosexual activists have sought to use the authority of the law, the power of the government, and the money of the taxpayers to censor, silence, coerce, and punish religious believers who criticize, oppose or resist them."

"We respectfully urge the people of the Republic of Ireland to weigh carefully the implications of same gender marriage to their own freedoms, and to **re-affirm the millennia-old definition of marriage by voting No on Friday."**

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