

Is amendment really necessary?

We've heard a lot of rhetoric back and forth on the Constitutional amendment on marriage from people with strong convictions and firm beliefs.

After looking at all that has been said about the issue, we agree with Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh's assessment of it: Beware the law of unintended consequences.

It's always amazing that something that seems so simple can turn out to be so complicated; that something that seems so clear can be muddled; that something that seems so basic can be so infinitely varied.

As it stands today, Kansas law states that marriage is a contract between one man and one woman. Period.

Why then do we need a constitutional amendment?

What good will this do us?

Will it change our law? No.

Will it make it harder for that law to be changed? Yes.

Is there any great pressures to change Kansas law to allow polygamy or same-sex marriages? No.

The law we have is enough. We believe that fear of same-sex marriages is driving those in favor of this amendment.

Fear is not a good reason for making new laws, as we have seen with the ridiculous regulations of the Patriot Act and many others.

The Patriot Act was passed quickly to deal with the threat of terrorism after the Sept. 11 attacks. It has become so invasive to personal privacy that 200-year-old liberties are being tossed out.

Drug laws, passed due to fear, are causing people to be told that suspicion of wrongdoing is the same as conviction. If you don't believe this, take \$10,000 in cash, put it in your pocket and go speeding on I-70. You will soon find that the police have your money and you have the responsibility to show that you got it legally.

So where does that leave us with the marriage amendment?

The amendment doesn't just say marriage is between one man and one woman. It goes on to say that, "No relationship, other than a marriage, shall be recognized by the state as entitling the parties to the rights or incidents of marriage."

Does this mean that the child of lesbian or gay parents won't be able to get health insurance?

Will an elderly woman, who has lived with an elderly man for many years without marriage because it reduces their Social Security benefits, not be able to collect his life insurance or be the one to say how and where he is buried?

We're all for marriage. We believe it is between one man and one woman. But we feel that we might live to regret the unintended consequences of this amendment.

Vote no.

— Cynthia Haynes

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

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★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

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Freedom is based on right to disagree

I applaud Stacy Richmond for her recent letter to the editor regarding my column about the Terry Schiavo case.

I am a firm believer we learn when we are challenged with new thoughts or a rehashing of old ones. The greatest thing about democracy is shared ideas and individual interpretation based on our beliefs and experiences.

The ability and goal to agree to disagree is probably the single most important factor in keeping democracy alive. Without the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion and the freedom of the press we would be mired in futility.

My husband often says the people who agree with us and those who disagree will cite the same reasons. And I believe that to be true.

The people who called saying they liked the article cited the very reasons Mrs. Richmond had for disliking it.

Good healthy discussion without personal attacks gives us all a chance to reaffirm our beliefs and view additional information. This case crosses party lines, generations and religious beliefs and there are no easy answers.

Congressional intervention in this case poses a great threat to the foundation of our Constitution.

The lack of a quorum during the vote on March 21 should signal to all a grave breach of our system.*

Laws will undoubtedly be formulated based on emotion however, the passing of such important legislation should adhere to expected procedure and rules of order.

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



At a time when we are faced with an increasing number of children lacking healthcare, inadequate education funding and a far-away war, the United States Congress gathering in "emergency" midnight session for this purpose seems a bit irresponsible.

Any involvement in this matter would best be left to lower government entities if left to any government at all. Each state is privileged to have its own governing body and Florida is no exception. It has its own judicial system, executive branch and legislature.

I am not in a position to judge Terry Schiavo's life before or after her cardiac arrest.

I am in no position to judge her husband or his motives or her parents and their motives.

What I am in a position to do is maintain and participate in a government dedicated to preserving individual rights.

Mrs. Richmond encouraged us to get out and vote.

Voting is our responsibility. Although I have my wishes as to the outcome of elections, I see it as far more important to

vote than on how we vote. I won't always agree with the outcome, but I will forever stand firm in the right to vote our mind and heart.

Our participation in what is not only a privilege but also an undeniable right is the foundation of democracy.

— mkw —

* On March 19, congressional leaders announced that they were drafting a bill which would transfer the case from state court to the federal court. In the very early hours of March 21, Congress approved emergency legislation.

Despite an absence of a quorum, the Senate approved the bill (S. 686 CPS) by voice vote. The bill passed unanimously, with 97 senators not present.

Meanwhile, in the House, deliberation continued during an unusual Sunday session. When it came to a vote, the motion was passed 203-58 (156 Republicans and 47 Democrats in favor, five Republicans and 53 Democrats against), with 174 Representatives (74 Republicans and 100 Democrats) not present for the vote. The vote concluded at 12:41 a.m.

President Bush returned from vacation at his Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, and signed the bill at 1:11 a.m. when it became Public Law 109-3. Additional information containing a history of the Terry Schiavo case can be found at the following web-site, which is also the source for the legislative information. www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Schiavo.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Man disagrees with school district's decision to reroof

To the Editor,
Save it. Don't replace it.

This has been our corporate philosophy since 1933. It has come to our attention that bids are now being taken for the roofs at the three schools in the Norton School District. The specifications are calling for removal and replacement ... which takes our company by surprise since we have been successfully maintaining these roofs since 1971.

These roofs have weathered storms, rain, sleet, snow, high winds, and extreme temperature changes without problems. With the exception of a hailstorm several years ago that caused some damage, (which the roofing company furnished materials free to make the necessary repairs), these roofs are still watertight, well maintained, and performing up to expectations. We sure haven't heard any complaints from the students, teachers, maintenance personnel or the principals about any roof leaks.

We agree that it is time to make some minor repairs and re-coat these roofs to extend the roof warranty. The cost to do this roof maintenance work is \$271,000.

But, for some reason, the Norton School Board, working with a hired consultant, has decided to tear off these perfectly good roofs and replace at a cost of over \$750,000 when \$271,000 will do.

Couldn't the difference (\$479,000) be better utilized by the school district?

Someone needs to ask the superintendent or the school board or the consultant this question — and the sooner, the better — before your roof investment is torn off and hauled to the city dump.

Even the roofing contractors looking at the school roof to formulate their bids per for proposed re-roofing specifications are wondering why they need to be removed and replaced.

Maybe the superintendent knows more about roofing than these roofing professionals — including our company, which has been doing the roofing applications on Norton schools for the past 34 years.

Perhaps the consultant, hired by the school district, is only familiar with new

roof construction and doesn't know how to extend the service life of existing roofs — and save the school district a dollar or two — and in this case, close to half a million dollars.

Why are we, or anyone else for that matter, not being allowed an opportunity to save these school district roofs and continue to successfully extend the service life on them?

It is a \$479,000 question and it is your tax dollars at stake. All we can do at this point is ask the question. But, you would think this situation warrants some due diligence on somebody's part there in middle America.

Harvey Knoll, Jr.
Knoll Building Maintenance
Osborne

Family thinks the vote should be 'yes'

To the Editor:

In just a few days, we will be voting on the Kansas Marriage Amendment. Protecting the institution of marriage — between one man and one woman — is one of the most important issues we Kansans will face. Numerous studies by social scientists agree that children raised in homes with a mother and father are far more

stable, healthy, and happy. Allowing same-sex marriage is damaging both to our children and our society. We urge you to vote "Yes" on the Marriage Amendment next Tuesday, April 5. Our children are depending upon us.

Dan and Debbie Field
607 Pratt Ave.
Almena