

## Why Restrict Marriage Licenses to Man and Woman?

It's for the benefit of government. As soon as a child is conceived there are costs to be borne. When a bride and groom get a marriage license, the government affirms their legitimate prerogative to use their reproductive powers to create new human life. Government also grants facilitating privileges and protections to them, coupled with obligations to be **fully responsible** for the offspring of their sexual union.

Here's how [Ohio](#) puts it:

Marriage is a legal as well as spiritual and personal relationship. When you exchange your marriage vows, you enter into a legal contract. There are three parties to that legal contract: you; your spouse; and the State of Ohio. The State is a party to the contract because, under its laws, you have certain obligations and responsibilities to each other, to any children you may have, and to Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

[Wisconsin](#) puts it this way:

Wisconsin law recognizes that both husband and wife have an obligation to support their children. Both of you are responsible for certain types of necessary family expenses even if you don't agree on the particular expense. Generally, these types of expenses cover medical care, education, food, and housing for family members....<sup>2</sup>

These **child care costs** are not inconsequential. The [Washington Post](#) reported that half a million children in the United States are in foster care, costing government between \$200 and \$800 per month per foster child,<sup>3</sup> which is only a portion of the cost of rearing the child. The U.S. Department of Agriculture [estimates](#) it will cost over \$200,000 to raise today's child to age 18.<sup>4</sup> A [study](#) by economist Benjamin Scafidi estimated that family fragmentation from divorce and unmarried-childbearing, costs American taxpayers at least \$112 billion dollars every year!<sup>5</sup>

**Stable marriages** bear these costs and represent a tremendous **avoided cost** for government. When people conceive children out-of-wedlock or when couples spin their families apart in divorce, the burden of childcare often shifts toward government. Government has the impossible task of protecting those vulnerable children without benefiting their **illegitimate parents**. Government may impose financial consequences such as child-care payments, but it also pours out money in the form of foster-care payments and adoption tax credits to place abandoned children with families.

It is important to distinguish between **“marriage”** and **“family.”** The civil concept of family needs to be flexible enough to include non-traditional familial alliances, which are individually judged by competent legal authority to be suitable for the placement of children who were conceived by others. If successfully placed, adults and their foster children or adopted children may draw together into happy non-traditional families.

The next generation of children can only be produced by the **complementary differences** between male and female. That's why government has a vested interest in promoting marriage as the [legal union](#) between one man and one woman as husband and wife.<sup>6</sup> A stable, licensed marriage where husband and wife legitimately conceive their own babies, nurture, financially support, and educate their children, and mold child behavior into responsible citizenship is the **least expensive** family for government and arguably the best for children. Such traditional marriages should be honored as society's fundamental standard and should be vigorously protected from advocates of alternatives who covet marriage's privileges and prestige. **Marriage** belongs exclusively to traditional families.

- <sup>1</sup> Mahoning County. 2009. "Marriage Licenses". The Mahoning County Communicator, Youngstown, Ohio.  
<http://www.mahoningcountyoh.gov/DepartmentsAgencies/Departments/ProbateCourt/TypesofCases/MarriageLicenses/tabid/1174/Default.aspx>
- <sup>2</sup> State Bar of Wisconsin. 2009. "Legal Q & A". Legal Explorer. Madison, Wisconsin.  
<http://www.legalexplorer.com/legal/legal-QA.asp?Sid=26&Qid=1#A4>
- <sup>3</sup> Rucker, P. October 28, 2007. "In U.S., Foster Care Funding in 'Crisis'". The Washington Post. Washington, D.C.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/26/AR2007102602577.html>
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture. March 24, 2008. "THE COST TO RAISE A CHILD TODAY: LESS FOR FOOD, MORE FOR CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION". News Release. Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, Alexandria, VA.  
<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/News-Media/News3-24-08.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Scafidi, B. 2008. "The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing - First-Ever Estimates for the Nation and All Fifty States". Institute for American Values. New York, NY.  
[http://www.marriagedebate.com/pdf/ec\\_div.pdf](http://www.marriagedebate.com/pdf/ec_div.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Congress. 1996. "Defense of Marriage Act". The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c104:H.R.3396.ENR>: