

WASHINGTON WATCH[®]

In one of the most decisive pro-family votes in recent history, the U.S. Senate approved the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) by a margin of 85-14. The Senate's action followed an overwhelming House vote of 342-67 and sent the bill to President Clinton's desk. Ironically, as if to underscore the bill's importance, the Sept. 10 vote came just as a Hawaiian Circuit Court resumed deliberation on a challenge by three homosexual couples to Hawaii's law reserving marriage for one man and one woman.

Many observers believe that the Hawaiian case will eventually legalize same-sex "marriage." DOMA was drafted to protect other states from having to recognize these counterfeit "marriage" licenses.

Sponsored by Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) and Reps. Bob Barr (R-Ga.) and Steve Largent (R-Okla.), DOMA also defined marriage for federal government purposes as "the union of a man and woman as husband and wife."

ENDA Run

On a more sober note, the Senate came within one vote, 50-49, of passing a homosexual jobs preference bill, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), sponsored by Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.). ENDA would have added "sexual orientation" to federal civil rights workplace laws and threatened the freedoms of religion, speech and association of millions of people.

Although ENDA's sponsors kept widening the list of exemptions to allay fears of a federally imposed acceptance of homosexuality on businesses, the bill could have affected Christian-owned bookstores, radio and TV stations, day care centers and all for-profit activities.

ENDA also would have enshrined "sexual orientation" and "bisexuality" as federally protected categories on a par with such traits as race, ethnicity or place of birth. "The DOMA victory is a testament to the hard work of America's pro-family groups and the actions of millions of Americans who let their legislators know that they expected marriage to be preserved," said FRC president Gary Bauer. "President

RING THOSE BELLS!

Clinton should now sign DOMA." As for Kennedy's gay jobs bill, Bauer said, "We will have to work just as hard to ensure that ENDA won't get as close if he tries to raise it again."

One of the most stirring defenses of marriage was made by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.): "To insist that male-male or female-female relationships must have the same status as the marriage relationship is more than unwise, it is patently absurd. The marriage bond as recog-

*"THE MARRIAGE BOND . . .
IS SOCIETY'S CORNERSTONE."*

—SENATOR ROBERT BYRD (D-W.VA.)

nized in the Judeo-Christian tradition, as well as legal codes of the world's most advanced societies, is the cornerstone on which the society itself depends for its moral and spiritual regeneration, as that culture is handed down, father to son and mother to daughter." Paging through his childhood Bible, Byrd said, "If same-sex 'marriage' is accepted, much of America has lost its moorings. . . . We have lost our way with a speed that is awesome, and what took thousands of

years to build is being dismantled in a generation."

ENDA originally was promoted as an amendment designed to kill the Defense of Marriage Act. Senate leaders struck a deal to bring up both bills for a direct vote. It was the first time the U.S. Senate voted on a national homosexual rights bill.

Although much was written about DOMA, the opposition to ENDA was substantially fueled by FRC research papers and newspaper columns, Capitol Hill lobbying by pro-family groups, and many media appearances by FRC personnel on Christian and secular stations. Focus on the Family also worked hard to alert people to ENDA's dangers.

John Mashburn, Legislative Director for Sen. John Ashcroft (R-Mo.), praised FRC's role in securing this difficult victory. "The outcome could have been very different if not for the efforts of organizations like the Family Research Council in presenting the facts and precedents on the issue, and the consequences of such a law on employers, workers and the country," Mashburn said.

Rising to speak in favor of DOMA and against ENDA were Sens. Ashcroft, Nickles, Dan Coats (R-Ind.), Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Trent Lott (R-Miss.).

What You Can Do

Call your senators and let them know how you feel about their votes on DOMA and ENDA at (202) 224-3121. Call our toll-free order line at 1-800-225-4008 to obtain a copy of the record votes on these two issues.

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BULLETIN • President Clinton signed DOMA into law at 12:50 a.m. on Sept. 21. "Even as he signed the bill," the *Washington Post* reported, "The White House scorned [it.]"

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