



SPEECH

Against civil unions and the homosexual agenda

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MP3 audio

First of all, I want to thank you all for coming and for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you and to state as a preference that, of course, I am a strong supporter, as many of you realize, of not only the Constitution of this country, but its Federal character.

I've always believed that certain decisions are best left to the states and to the people of the states, and those decisions that have to do with domestic law enforcement, and with the kind of regulations and regimes established with respect to things like marriage and so forth, these have always in American life been the province of the state governments. I believe deeply that is right, because these are decisions that affect the everyday lives of our people.

All such decisions ought to be made at levels of government closer to the people--the levels of government where they have the representation and influence and control that comes from being represented by folks who basically go home every night to the same conditions you do, and, therefore, have to live under the laws they make.

That can't always be said, can it, of the folks we send off to Washington? They end up living there and who knows these days what laws they're living under there. I don't know for sure.

So, I feel very strongly that this is a decision that has to be made responsibly by the people of Vermont, but I also think you realize that your decision will have an effect on what goes on in the rest of the country.

At the very least, as we noticed in various parts of the country, including most recently in California, states have already started to take steps aimed, in a sense, at trying to immunize themselves against the consequences of a state that adopts a change in the understanding of marriage in such a way, in fact, as to threaten the marriage institution everywhere in America.

The Full Faith and Credit Clause of the Constitution constitutes a vehicle that could be abused in order to take any one decision made by a state and force it down the throats of people in every state. I think we would be naive to pretend that we don't know that's what happening and that, in fact, Vermont is being used as a "stalking horse" in an effort aimed at subverting the social structures and institutions throughout the country.

So, I want to thank you for the opportunity to share some words with you on behalf, I believe, of people all over America who clearly have more than a passing interest in the decision, the very important decision that you all have to take. That's step number one.

The second thing that I want to do as a preface is to be frank about the truth. Whatever else we are dealing with here, we are dealing with the challenge that is now being made to this

entire society, by people who are advocates of the homosexual agenda.

To pretend that this issue does not arise in that context, and in the context of many arguments being made in order to promote that cause, would kind of be like pretending that civil rights legislation in the '60's had nothing to do with Black Americans. It certainly did.

So I think that the first order of business is to try to understand whether or not the kind of claims and premises of the homosexual movement, which in the end purport to treat this kind of issue as if it is like race, a matter of civil rights-- is that correct, and on what grounds can one make that case or not make it?

I think that a lot of times, and I've encountered this many times over the course of my little career, so far, in politics and in the course of this presidential campaign and so forth, where folks will step forward and they'll make the argument, especially to me.

I had a lawyer in, I think it was Iowa, at a breakfast meeting I was at, who confronted me with a question, because I had taken a stand at one of the debates that I would return to a ban on homosexuality in the military. He said, "Well, how can you do that? What makes this issue any different than when we desegregated the military back in 1950 and it had to be done by executive order and everybody had to do it?" It's the same issue, he claimed, civil rights justice is involved.

I mean, he had announced himself as an openly homosexual male. He had many clients among people in the realm and so forth and so on, and it was said in a way that kind of, "Well, I put you on the spot now. Now see how you get out of that."

Well, see, in point of fact, though, that claim--that we must treat this issue in the same way as, say, race was treated, and so forth--is a claim that's obviously, in my opinion, untenable. And it's untenable because race is a condition that is beyond the control of the individual. As a state and condition, I am not determining right now the behavior of my skin. Right?

Well, no it's true. It has been pre-determined, by God actually, and I can do nothing about it. Not in general and not in any particular case. So, if we accept the premise that we're going to make some kind of comparison with the way we handled racial issues, and we're going to deal with the issue of sexual orientation in this way, then what are we saying?

We are saying, I think pretty clearly, that we're going to treat sexual inclination and behavior as if they are like race: matters that are beyond the control of the individual.

Now I want you to think about that very seriously, because quite often we go into this as if we already know what the issue is, and the issue is, "Do I condemn this one or that one, for their sexual activity?" and so forth and so on.

In the first instance, I do not believe that is the issue. Given the arguments that are being made, the fundamental question is, can we as a society treat sexual behavior and inclination the way we treat race for purposes of discrimination? That's the key question.

Notice I didn't say homosexual behavior, because I think that's also one of the flawed and faulty premises of this discussion. We are not dealing simply with one kind of sexual behavior. And if institutions are modified, they will be modified in such a way that all forms of different sexual lifestyles must be accepted. You watch.

There is no way to avoid it. We live in society in which the equal protection of the law and so forth and so on demand it. If you are going to say that we are going to take one kind of sexual behavior and inclination and treat it as if it cannot be subject to accountability and moral judgment, then that's going to be the case with all forms of sexual behavior and inclination.

It has to be. Logically, there's no way to draw the line. No way to draw the line whatsoever. And so that means if you establish any kind of thing--domestic partnerships, civil union, you name it; call it what you will--what you have essentially done is not just legitimize this or that relationship between homosexuals. You've legitimized polygamy. You've legitimized

polyandry. You've legitimized, in fact, whatever kind of arrangements individuals want to make.

And you're not even legitimizing it because it's their choice. You're legitimizing it on the grounds that it is not their choice--and that, in point of fact, when it comes to matters of sexual behavior and inclination, we cannot treat individuals in such a way as to act as if what they do is a consequence of their own choosing.

But then, the question becomes for the rest of us: can we in fact, faithfully take that position with respect to human sexual behavior? When we consider this, we're not talking about, is this one or that one a bad person, or all this junk they try to pretend. No. I'm just asking a logical question. And the logical question is, if I treat sexual behavior and inclination as if sexual behavior and inclination are like race, conditions beyond the individual's control, what are the consequences of what I am doing?

Don't you have to ask that? Can the legislature in this state responsibly consider the bill before it without asking that question? I don't think so. So let's see what the consequences are.

There are certain institutions, marriage is one of them, the laws we have against certain kinds of sexual activity, public sexual behavior is still restrained in this country, I think, isn't it? So that whether you're homosexual, heterosexual, . . . what I mean about homosexual, heterosexual is, if you go out and you just have a strong feeling that you want to do it in the road, the police are still going to stop you regardless of the song.

All this being the case, such laws are made, aren't they, under the assumption that, in any given instance, individuals are capable of controlling their sexual impulses. Isn't that right? The last time I looked, it is not right to hold individuals responsible for things over which they have no control. So, if it starts snowing outside and you come and want to hold me to blame for that, and punish me because it's starting to snow, we all know that's ridiculous. I don't control the snow.

Well, if we are going to premise that the movements of passion and the impulses of sexual desire and inclination are as beyond human control as the storms and the snowfall and the rain, they are just kind of natural movements and we can't intervene to do anything about them, what becomes of all the laws that are based on the assumption that we can, in fact, control our sexual impulses?

Starting with the laws that regulate public decency--because, after all, homosexuals want to say they can't control their inclination to do it with people of the same sex. What about folks who can't control their inclination to do it in front of other people, to do it on the swing, to do it in the public place, to do it in the library, to do it in the schoolyard, wherever?

If we're going to say that human sexual impulses are not subject to human decision-making, and we're going to accept that premise in order to treat this like it's some civil rights issue, then what happens to all those laws? And, of course, there are other consequences more serious than that. I started with one that in some ways is easier to see--it's not inflammatory, right, talking about maintaining standards against public copulation, though obviously it does require restraint.

But what about other things that require restraint, like the mere fact that you desire so-and-so, doesn't mean that he or she has to be with you. If you enforce your will because of some strong passion, we usually call that a crime of violence and we punish it as rape. If I am to say that sexual behavior and impulse and inclination are not subject to control, then what becomes of laws like that?

And who is the victim in that case? Is it only the person who is raped, or also the person who, being subject to this impulse of passion and acting on it is then going to be held accountable as if they were in control, when in point of fact, the premise that we are asked to accept is that they are not in control.

And if individuals are not in control of their sexual inclination and behavior, how can we punish them for what they do? How can we do so? And not only in this area, we live in a society where, thank God--and I think, given the history of this particular protection, you can literally thank God--we have instituted protection for our younger children against sexual exploitation and abuse.

One of the things that pains me sometimes about our society, is the number of things we take for granted. And this kind of assumption that children are not available for sexual purposes, we take it for granted in this society. We just can say, "Oh that's shocking, people don't do that."

I beg to differ with you. Throughout most of human history, in most times and places, children have been available for sexual purposes. Once physical changes occurred that made them as the French said, (unintelligible) they were there, available to be used, and nothing was considered wrong with that.

Of course, those were societies also, by the way, in which human dignity was not respected in other ways, in which people could be enslaved and abused for other purposes. In which, in point of fact, weakness, such as the weakness that characterizes children, was considered fair game for abuse, because the strong, in fact, determined the standards of justice and they felt, therefore, could use and abuse other human beings according to their whim.

One of the things that I think is a consequence of our understanding that there is a higher justice than might, and that, in fact, each and every individual, whatever their condition, or background, or status, weakness or strength, they are entitled to be respected in the dignity of their person and not abused, one of the necessary consequences of that, is that the difference between children and adults cannot be exploited in such a way that children--lacking maturity, strength, judgment, whatever other things may act to their disadvantage--can be abused by adult people.

Now, I consider that to be terribly important. It's not only terribly important because I have children, either. It's terribly important because once you allow that line to be crossed, once you allow individuals of weaker status to be exploited and abused by those of stronger status on whatever grounds, it's not just the children whose dignity is exposed to violation. Because once we abandon the principle of respect that seeks to discipline strength and maturity and judgment, and compel it under the law to behave responsibly, once we have abandoned that, then we have, in fact, abandoned and violated one of the fundamental moral premises of justice, which is in fact the basis of our whole way of life.

So, I think that protection for children is terribly important. I have a feeling most people in this country do. But what is it based on? It's based on the understanding that there's a difference between children and adults. And what is that difference? Now I know we use age as a criterion, but we all know that age is a way of getting at something else.

The difference that we seek to deal with here isn't just the question of years passing. We assume that in the course of the passage of those years, adults develop certain capacities, which then give to their consent a quality that it does not have in children. Is this not so? And that quality comes from certain elements that come from greater knowledge, greater experience and that greater knowledge and experience, by the way, isn't just greater knowledge and experience of the world. It is greater knowledge and experience of yourself.

And so that that passage of years, dealing with your own feelings and inclinations and impulses, things that when you were six or seven seemed like they had to be now, you realize they don't have to be now, that they can be put off, they can be controlled. You can order judgment and decision in light of your own goals and purposes, and also, of course, in light of the ethical and legal standards that are required of responsible individuals and citizens.

So, the essential difference between adults and children is in our assessment of the capacity for that kind of responsibility. And since we make a judgment--it's a general judgment, it's not true in every single case, but it's basically true--that up to a certain age you can't expect that

children are going to have that knowledge of self and the world that is required to make mature and responsible judgments, and therefore, the consent that they give at any given instance, that requires such mature judgment, is not a consent that we consider equal to that of an adult. Is this right?

I think all of that is true and the rationale for it is true. So it's a difference in maturity. It's a difference, by the way, in how you handle your own passions, and impulses, and inclinations, and with the assumption being that children are kind of more helpless in the face of those things, and that overcome by feelings, and inclinations, and desires that are of the moment, it's harder for them to defer and to pay attention to the strictures of better judgment, of law, of ethics, whatever it might be.

And so, to a certain degree, even in difficult cases like this six-year-old that shot one of his classmates, nobody's going to suggest that that six-year-old be tried as an adult. And the reason is very clear. We are all prone to think, "What adults let them get into that situation," of who did what, but it's the adults who went wrong.

The child did a wrong thing, but what we seek is not to punish, but to help in that case--precisely because we recognize that childhood, in the end, cannot be held fully responsible. We are teaching them responsibility. We cannot assume it. Is that not so? I think all these premises are clear.

Now, given that that's the basic difference between the distinction between adults and children, and that it involves the ability to deal responsibly with the impulses of passion, let us say we accept the premise of the homosexual movement--that premise being that we treat homosexuality and other sexual inclinations like race, and based on that treatment, we assume that individuals cannot govern their impulses and inclinations.

Well, if an individual who is thirty years old cannot govern their impulses and inclinations, somebody tell me what is the difference for that purpose between that individual and a child. There is none, because the basis for making that distinction has to do precisely with that ability, maturely and responsibly, to deal one's impulses and inclinations.

So if we accept the premise that no matter how old you are when a sexual feeling comes over you, you are pulled into a whirlpool of inclination and condition that, like race, is ineluctable, that "must be the way it's gonna be," then for the purposes of that particular passion, in this case sexual passion, you're a child. You're a child at ten, you're a child at twenty, you're a child at thirty, you're a child at seventy--because if, in fact, you do not have that fundamental ability, in light of rational and moral and ethical standards, in light even of your own purposes, rationally, to respond to the impulses that you are subject to, then you are no better off than a child, and your consent and your inclination has no different quality than that of a child.

Now, the reason I make this point is so we'll think through the implication of this agenda, because if we accept the agenda, you do understand then that the line between adulthood and childhood for sexual purposes is erased. Accept this premise, and you cannot sustain it.

I've tried to make this case to folks for years. I've made other cases, too, because if you think that you can just arbitrarily accept a premise, and then you are going to successfully resist its natural consequences, think again. Because we have not been able to do so--and by the way, under our form of law, it's very difficult to do so, because once we accept a premise as rational, others will step forward and say, "That rational premise applies to me. By what right do you deny me the same privilege?"

And by the way, faster than I ever would have thought, we're already seeing in academic circles and so-called scientific circles, things coming forward as they did in the '60's and '70's that are now moving in the direction I just spoke of.

We know for a fact, don't we, that just recently some study comes out essentially wishing to take rape out of the category of crime of violence, put it in the category of uncontrollable impulse and inclination, and put the onus for avoiding it on women who have to learn to dress right and do the things they're supposed to do, so people who are subject to this inclination

will not be raping them.

Now, I would think that anybody in their right mind could recognize the morally-offensive nature of that argument, but nonetheless, it is put out there. And now we're going to have to treat it, I suppose, as some kind of "well, this is scientific this or that." The same argument, by the way, the same type of arguments, have been put forward with regularity, and therefore with less novelty now, about pedophilia--to such a degree, in fact, that I remember a couple of years ago there was a big thing in Germany, and they had gotten some folks who were involved in the distribution of child pornography and all this, and when these individuals were convicted and the judge was sentencing them, the judge actually expressed some regret over the fact that he had to punish them simply because they were pursuing their lifestyle.

Now, we could say that that seems a little shocking, but no it's actually quite logical, because if, in fact, for sexual purposes, one is governed and sort of conditioned by biology, genetics, whatever it is, and then you have to go that way, then people who have an inclination for people of the same sex aren't the only people subject to sexual passion are they?

As a matter of fact, one of the things I find kind of strange about the way this argument is sometimes made is that they talk as if it's some novel discovery that sexual passion is actually based in biology and genetics and such. Now, I don't know whether all these arguments made about homosexual this's and that's are true. I have read things that certainly suggest it's controversial and not generally accepted necessarily, but let us even assume, for the sake of argument, that we are going to say that, well, yes, it's somehow got a genetic basis or a biological basis or whatever.

Well, so does adultery, I think. It's pretty deeply rooted, too, in the biology of most people. We see a sexually attractive person, and there is a very deep "law in our members," as St. Paul said, that drives us, without regard to ethics or standards, to sexual mixing with that person. Generally speaking, we are called upon to control that impulse, aren't we?

First, we are called upon in our society to control it, because you've got to make sure the other person consents. But, second, you are also called upon to control it, because you've made higher promises to somebody else, and we still expect that you shall keep them. But what becomes of our respect for those promises if it is the case that your basic inclination is beyond your control?

And how on earth can these folks expect that I am going to sit here like a fool, watch them make an argument that says sexual passion is the result of genetic, biological, or other condition, and then pretend that I don't see the implication of that for other kinds of sexuality than homosexuality? Of course it's there.

And this, by the way, is not an argument about what any given individual--homosexual or otherwise--will do or will not do. That's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about whether, logically, we can accept the premise that they ask us to accept in this case and not then have to accept it in all these other cases where it is logically true.

And those other cases, whether they include homosexuality, include adultery, include all forms of sexual behavior, the ultimate objective here, I believe, is not about liberating the homosexuals, giving them rights or anything else. It is ultimately about taking the whole business of human sexuality and removing it from the realm of moral regulation.

What we are being asked to accept is the notion that sexual behavior cannot be, in fact, regulated by moral judgment. Not in the law, not outside the law--and I say "in the law" because we're talking, obviously, in this particular case, about marriage (right?), and the privileges that we accord to the heterosexual, marriage-based family that have been around in our society and civilization for centuries. Those privileges accorded to that particular institution--and which, by the way, have roots so deep that I believe that it has literally, in the past, been considered on the part of any state or government, *casus belli*, if the state withdraws its support for the social infrastructure that includes the family structure. You know that.

And in our society, the government is consequent to individuals and families, not prior to it. We come together as a civil society (that is the theory), and that civil society, which pre-dates the government, then, on the basis of certain limited and restricted purposes and intentions, accords to government certain powers to be used on behalf of, in the interest of, for the common benefit of those who have formed the government. Is this not so?

One of those pre-existing institutions is, in fact, the heterosexual marriage-based family. The basis for the entire compact on which this society rests is that government's power will be used in such a way as to respect and not destroy those antecedent institutions.

If, and I believe legislators here need to think through, we're playing here with the most dangerous kind of fire in human life. This is not a game. It's not some kind of thing where we can just deal with the consequences for individuals. A responsible legislator in this state or anywhere else must deal with the implications for our entire society.

What is the implication for this society, for the entire social contract or compact on which it rests, if the government takes steps that withdraw its support for the privileges without which the marriage-based heterosexual family cannot be sustained? At that point the government will have betrayed its compact with the people.

So, I think it obviously has to be thought through carefully--not just in terms of its individual consequence, but, in terms of what happens when we have so defined our understanding of human sexual passion, purposes, and of human nature itself, that we take sexual behavior out of the realm of moral judgment and accountability and put it instead in a realm like race, where you are not responsible for what you do.

And I think that to do that will ultimately mean, what? The demise of all these institutions: the protection of our children's innocence, the ground cut out from under it; the expectation of fidelity in marriage, the ground cut out from under it; the restriction of marriage, by the way, to marriage between one person and another person instead of between one person and several people.

And of course, there are people, I guess, who don't care about this. But I believe they are people who, therefore, do not understand the interconnections between our social institutions and their consequences. Destroy the heterosexual marriage-based family, destroy the notion of family as marriage between one person and another person, and you re-introduce in our society those things which have, throughout human history, been the premises of tyranny, not of freedom.

And if we then allow the social institutions of tyranny and despotism to prevail, what makes us think we will be able to sustain the individualism and the spirit of liberty without which self-government cannot survive?

So this is not an issue that just is restricted in its implications to individuals. It has enormous social implications--implications that go, in fact, so far that they strike at the very heart of that understanding which underlies our whole constitutional system of government.

And they may say, "Well, that's so large. We were just talking about whether you can have benefits for folks." No, we are talking about the privileged status and condition and the state support and the government for the most fundamental and therefore most important non-government institution in our society.

And I think that we have a right of fact to demand that the government not take steps that withdraw that necessary support, that support which was in fact a condition of the establishment of the government in the first place.

Final point, if we're going to treat this as an issue of civil rights, I've often wondered when we start trying to deal with civil rights, we forget that the recognition of a right involves also, by definition, the establishment of an obligation. We don't usually think of that, do we?

But, if you have a right, then everybody else has a corresponding obligation that arises from respect for that right. It's one of those things we don't like to think of when the throw loosely around "right to this," "right to that," "right to the other thing."

Somebody was telling me at lunch that Al Gore said that we have a right to personal computers. I think that, in light of that statement of rights, I'd like to ask which manufacturer's computers do we have the right to. Because whoever it is, I'm going to go take their computers, and since I have a right to them, I'm not going to pay for them, either.

You understand what I'm saying? If I have a right to "x," somebody else has an obligation to provide "x" or to respect my claim to "x." So, if I walk into a store and I walk off with a nice personal computer, they can't interfere with me, because I'm just exercising my rights.

We understand the absurdity of this because, obviously, if we define right in that way, what are we doing? We are destroying the freedom of others. And if you define a right itself in such a way that you destroy the freedom of others, then the whole idea of rights becomes the enemy of liberty--which is a contradiction that as a free people we cannot afford to introduce into our midst.

And I think this is what's happening with the homosexual issue. Why do I say it? Well, think about it. If we're going to remove sexual behavior and inclination from the realm of moral judgment, and we're going to use law to enforce this non-discrimination, both with respect to the behavior of the governments, with respect to the behavior of individuals, this is where we're heading.

It's been the whole purpose of this new invention of the term "hate crime"--a concept that, by the way, I am very deeply worried about, because what does it add to the word "crime" to put hate in front of it? If I go out and I kill somebody, I've committed a crime. You can consider whether I hated that person or not in considering the motive for the crime, and that's perfectly reasonable. But my hatred for that person, are you going to make that a crime? Because then my attitude will be a crime, right? And when you punish attitudes, you are then logically also in a position where you can punish words that give rise to that attitude.

The only thing that the concept of "hate crime" adds to our lexicography is to hand to the government the power to regulate opinion and speech in ways heretofore considered incompatible with our freedom.

But I mention it, because it shows you where we're going with all this. And we're going in a direction that, in fact, is going to forbid certain opinions and punish them when they are expressed.

And the opinion in the case of homosexuality is clear. And it's an opinion, by the way, that has been for a long time--especially of course in our tradition in the West, but elsewhere as well, it has been the legitimate subject of moral judgment.

As a matter of fact, I don't know too many societies that had any kind of ethical code that didn't include sexual behavior under the things to be regulated by that code. Certain kinds of sexual behavior being right and appropriate, other kinds being wrong and inappropriate. It seems in fact to be a pre-requisite for civilized life, that one have such rules in order to establish and determine what sexual relations will be.

We forget, of course, don't we, the part of the reason we take such rules very seriously is so that each and every individual will be able to establish, without question, their claim to individuality. I just throw that out for anybody who wants to think about it, because I'm not going to go into the deep philosophic implications of it here. But they are very deep. Very deep.

Because it has been considered for time immemorial--go back and read Plato and all these wonderful philosophers. The ability to know one's parents and to know one's antecedents was part of the ability to establish one's own sense of who you are, independent of what other institutions and powers in the world may tell you. And it, therefore, is one of the strong

foundations of individualism, and as we know that is one of the strong foundations of our way of life.

But, all of that being said, we do have, don't we, in the context of opinions and all this, the right both to our religious opinion and more importantly, under our federal constitution and more strongly stated, as it has been pointed out to me, in the Vermont Constitution, you all actually have protection for the freedom of religion. And not the freedom to think what you please, not to have the freedom to have any opinion that you please, no, it is the free exercise of religion that's protected. It is the ability to carry one's opinion into action, to order and govern one's life according to those moral principles that are the consequence of one's religious beliefs.

And if one of the moral principles is that "thou shalt not lie with a man as with a woman. It is an abomination," if one of the moral principles strictly enjoins against certain kinds of sexual behavior (adultery outside of marriage, whatever it might be), then if the government steps in and says, "No, you cannot show intolerance for that behavior," the government is, in fact, dictating the abandonment of religious conscience and belief. And in our society, the government has no legitimate authority to dictate in this area.

So, I think, that on those grounds, first, on the grounds that if carried to the form of coercion or interference with our rights, and second, on the grounds that carried into law, as it is now being proposed to do, in ways that withdraw the privileged status of the heterosexual marriage-based family, and substitute for it whatever you call it.

Now, they can put whatever name on it they want, in whatever bill they like. What they are essentially doing is gutting the substance of the marriage institution. They are taking all of those things which are constituted from time immemorial, society's recognition of and respect for the special characteristics and status of the marriage institution, and they are taking them away and handing them to somebody else.

Now, that's like saying that "so-and-so is the Duke of Gloucester, but I'm going to take all of privileges and all of the lands and all of the things that are attached to that title and give them to somebody else. But I'll still call you the Duke." Okay?

I hope we have not so lost our common sense that we can't see through this charade, that we can't understand exactly what is happening here. And I think that the agenda goes way beyond homosexuality or anything else.

Way back in the 19th Century, Marx and his buddies said that in order to really establish a totalitarian and collectivist society you had to get rid of the bourgeois family. And one of the ways that you can get rid of the bourgeois family is to utterly destroy the moral concepts and context and the legal support without which it cannot survive.

It would be like taking air away from us. Remove the oxygen level. Remove the oxygen from this atmosphere, and we're going to choke to death. And that is what these folks are doing now with the family. Some doing it knowingly, others, sadly, in your legislature are probably just going along because they haven't thought it through.

But I would have to say that on your own behalf, on behalf of your children, on behalf of this state, and also on the behalf of those of us all around the country who will be affected by what you do, I think you must demand that they think it through--and that they think it through at a level that goes beyond emotionalism and specious arguments, and looks seriously and carefully, as I have tried to do here, at the great issues of principle that are involved for this or any society.

I believe that we cannot withdraw support for the heterosexual, marriage-based family, and cast its privileges to anybody who feels like it, without casting the fate of this civilization do the dogs. And I do not believe, by the way, I'm one of those people, I've said it many times, I don't think that it's my business or anybody else's to be wandering into people's bedrooms figuring out what they're doing there. I have no inclination to do it. I don't see how we enforce laws that try to do it, and frankly I'd take them all off the books, because I don't see how you

deal with it.

But when folks come into the public arena and go beyond our willingness to be indifferent to their private behavior, want us to accept as a public consequence the destruction of the foundation of our most important and fundamental institutions, then we have the right, we have the obligation, to oppose what they ask of us.

I frankly don't understand, either, how people could pretend that this somehow represents some kind of a--you know, on their part, they would say they're fighting for all these wonderful things. No, actually I don't think it's very compassionate to come into a society and stand up and say, "I want to do it this way, and if I'm going to do it this way, I'm not going to be content that you simply let me go my way, I'm going to force you to accept it and to destroy every institution you depend on, so I can feel good about myself."

I think that's a radical form of selfishness that lacks compassion and that is willing to introduce into the bosom of society disorders that will destroy it, so that individuals may, without conscience, indulge what they do. And I believe that this is not the course of humanity. It is not the course of consideration. And I would ask those who are championing this agenda to stand back and look at themselves.

I am not in any sense in favor of going after or persecuting people because of their sexual behavior. I'll pray for them instead.

But I also believe, though, that compassion and decency require that as we are willing to stand aside and, where there are no public consequences, allow adult individuals to do what they may, I think that they should have the decency and compassion and consideration for us not to come forward and demand that, for their sake, we destroy our civilization. Thank you.

