

**Let the Citizens of the District of Columbia Vote on the
Definition of Marriage**

Reasons for Congress to Return D.C. City Council Bill 18-482

“Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009”

“HOLD OFF ON ANY LEGISLATION UNTIL THE PEOPLE HAVE VOTED THROUGH A BALLOT MEASURE, FOR OR AGAINST!”

Why Return Bill 18-482?

- As of October 31, 2009, there are 314,934 Democrats; 28,685 Republicans; 4,157 Statehood-Green Party and 67,603 Independents/No-Party registered voters. **There are 416,657 total registered voters in the District of Columbia NOT just 13 Council Members. They deserve the same right as the 31 states that have already voted on the definition of marriage.**
- On October 6, 2009 David Catania introduced Bill 18-482 - “Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009” (“Bill”).
- The hearing on October 26 regarding the Bill was supposed to be a Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary hearing, comprised of Committee Chairman Phil Mendelson and Council Members Yvette Alexander, Muriel Bowser, Mary Cheh and Jack Evans. The hearing, however, became a quasi Committee of the Whole meeting with 10 Council Members: Mendelson, Bowser, Cheh, Evans, Kwame Brown, Michael Brown, Harry Thomas, Jr., Tommy Wells, David Catania and Jim Graham.
- Each of the 10 Council Members present declared their positions (in essence voting) *before the first witness was allowed the opportunity to speak for or against the Bill.*
- In Chairman Pro Tempore Evans’ statement (*the current longest-serving Councilmember*), **he threatened anyone who sought the help of Congress to ensure the people’s right to vote on this important issue.** In a court of law that would be seen as intimidating the witnesses.
- On October 26, 2009 Committee Chair Mendelson threatened to have opponents who expressed their emotions through clapping removed from the hearing on the Bill. Chairman Mendelson was admonished by Council Member Kwame Brown not to take such action because the people are very passionate about this issue.
- At the continuation of the hearing on November 2, after a same-sex couple announced an engagement, there was an eruption of applause. **It was not until after their testimony was completed that Chairman Mendelson commented that there is a rule against applause that the audience should “be mindful” of.**
- The timer was not working at the time of the hearing and Chairman Mendelson was left to manage the 3 minute timing of witnesses, which can allow for unfairness in time allotment
- The City Council decided to have a hearing on the Bill on the same day as the Board of Elections and Ethics Hearing on the Marriage Initiative of 2009, **unnecessarily inconveniencing the people.**
- Three Advisory Neighborhood Commissions have adopted joint resolutions, and over 50 individual ANC Commissioners have already signed on to the *People’s Resolution* calling for a citizens’ initiative on the definition of marriage in D.C. **This represents over 100,000 District residents.**
- **The D.C. Board of Elections is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the District’s mayor.**
- **The City Council voted on Bill 18-482 on December 1, 2009 before the initiative process was exhausted. There was no reason that the Bill had to be rushed.**
- **Elected officials have the authority to decide for the people, but *not without the advice and consent of the people.***

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