

Bush might support marriage amendment: Will support gay marriage measure "if necessary"

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President Bush said in a television interview that he could support a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, but also said "whatever legal arrangements people want to make" should be permitted if approved at the state level. "If necessary, I will support a constitutional amendment which would honor marriage between a man and a woman, codify that," Bush told Diane Sawyer on ABC News' *Primetime*.

"The position of this administration is that whatever legal arrangements people want to make, they're allowed to make, so long as it's embraced by the state." The president went on to criticize the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, which ruled in November that gay couples should have the right to civil marriage. "The court, I thought, overreached its bounds as a court," Bush told Sawyer. "It did the job of the legislature. It was a very activist court in making the decision it made."

Overall, Bush said in the December 16 program that he thinks the matter of civil unions should be handled on the state level but said an amendment may be necessary if "judicial rulings undermine the sanctity of marriage." The president told Sawyer "we're all sinners" when she asked if gays are sinners. "I also think it's very important, on this subject, that the country be tolerant of people and understand people, but tolerance and belief in marriage aren't mutually exclusive points of view," he said.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins said some of Bush's comments worried him. "While I'm encouraged President Bush says he supports a constitutional amendment honoring marriage between a man and a woman, I'm very concerned about his additional comments which seem to suggest the definition of marriage, which predates Western civilization and the United States Constitution, can be

redefined at the state level,” he said in a statement issued by his conservative Christian organization.

Alliance for Marriage President Matt Daniels, whose organization has proposed a Federal Marriage Amendment, welcomed Bush’s comments. “We are grateful to President Bush for saying that he may support a marriage amendment in response to the constitutional challenges to all state and federal marriage laws that are expected to follow from the recent Massachusetts court decision,” he said in a statement. *-Religion News Service*