

**JC Watts column**  
**Stephens Media Group**  
**06/06 – Marriage**

There's an old adage – you've heard it a thousand times – you are judged by the company you keep. If the converse were true, I guess that means we are also judged by those whose company we don't keep. Or, the company with whom you may disagree.

If such is the case, I'm perfectly comfortable not keeping company – ideologically – with one Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts.

In this case, I would refer to his position on the issue of marriage.

The notoriously outspoken salon from the Bay State is never shy about passing judgment on anyone who dares to view an issue opposite that of his perspective. He takes delight in impugning the integrity of those across the ideological aisle. (See Bork, Robert: floor speech on Bork nomination to Supreme Court, 1987.)

Well, he did it again this week, in reference to the proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in the USA. In an op-ed published in his hometown newspaper, Kennedy referred to the ban as "bigotry, pure and simple." His hyperbole went as far as to claim that an amendment protecting the oldest and most valued factor in cultural stability is "...a vote to impose discrimination on all 50 states."

Kennedy and pretty much every talking head on network and cable television believe that the timing of this proposal in the U.S. Senate is politically motivated. The fact is, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist said long ago that the Senate would visit this issue this year. The timing of this debate is a discussion on which the two sides will never agree.

I believe there is never a wrong time to do the right thing.

This is the right thing. It's right for marriage, for families, for children, and for our culture. One only needs to look across the Atlantic Ocean to witness the decaying cultures in Scandinavia that have embraced the abnormal as the norm.

Stanley Kurtz, who studied at Harvard and has been published in such diverse periodicals as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, noted in the *Weekly Standard* that "a majority of children in Sweden and Norway are born out of wedlock. Sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents. Not coincidentally, these countries have had something close to full gay marriage for a decade or more. Same-sex marriage has locked in and reinforced an existing Scandinavian trend toward the separation of marriage and parenthood. (And) by looking closely at it we can answer the key empirical question underlying the gay marriage debate. Will same-sex marriage undermine the institution of marriage? It already has.

Indeed.

I submit that protecting marriage isn't simply expeditious politics in an election year. I wish it were. Simply, this is good public policy. I acknowledge that we must always be careful in how we allow government to intervene in the lives of adults. But government does have a

responsibility to determine in the people's house what is sanctioned as opposed to allowing an appointed judge who has no accountability to the people to unilaterally determine cultural mores. Should four or five judges in Mass be able to set the tone for the entire nation? Should they define marriage? This issue must be removed from the authority of the courts, and back in the hands of the people. The people who have voted overwhelmingly to protect marriage.

The president's detractors say he is just appealing to his political base. The fact is this issue appeals to a group not normally affiliated with a Republican president...the black community.

Indeed, the black community is overwhelmingly pro-marriage and pro-family. Blacks have stood with Republicans on marriage and life issues for years. At a recent event in support of this constitutional amendment, as many black ministers stood behind the president in support of him as did conservative Caucasian leaders.

The challenge facing Republicans, and a challenge they have yet to meet, is to appeal to the minority community not on social issues, but on opportunity issues. I've been talking to my friends in the GOP since my first speech to a crowd of Republicans at the 1990 Oklahoma GOP convention.

On issues of concern to minorities, Republican leaders need to decide which side they're on. Black farmers have been discriminated against for generations now, and opportunities for minorities in procurement opportunities and diversity in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 are still sadly lacking.

If the Grand Old Party can reach out to minorities with real opportunity to prosper as well as the social issues on which they are kindred, my party will be the majority for generations to come.