

**MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURES SHIFT SIDES TO DENY BAN ON
GAY MARRIAGE**

June 14, 2006 - Statement of the Massachusetts Bishops

Ignoring the will of more than 170,000 people who signed the marriage petition and blocking the people from exercising their right to vote is tragic.

In the Commonwealth, our state laws provide for the process whereby the citizens have a right to vote on a constitutional amendment. However, the leadership of the Democratic Party refuses to allow citizens and elected officials to vote their conscience on social issues. Their ideological positions undermine the common good. Today, the common good has been sacrificed by the extreme individualism that subordinates what is best for children, families and society.

It is obvious from the unprecedented amount of pressure that was put upon elected officials that opponents of the amendment believed that the voters of the Commonwealth would have voted in favor of the traditional definition of marriage. The pressure tactics were engineered to insure that the will of the people would not prevail.

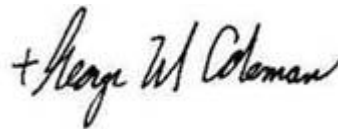
The question for those elected officials who opposed allowing the marriage amendment to be voted on by the people is: do we live in a country where people are free to vote their conscience or are we controlled by what is viewed as politically correct and by powerful special interest groups?

We extend our sincere appreciation to those members of the legislature who stood firm in their support to allow the people an opportunity to exercise their right to vote on the marriage amendment.

Perhaps in the future legislators will have the courage to let the people vote on an issue so important to the future of families.



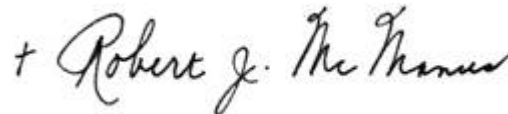
Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley
Archdiocese of Boston



Most Rev. George W. Coleman
Diocese of Fall River



Most Rev. Timothy A. McDonnell
Diocese of Springfield



Most Rev. Robert J. McManus
Diocese of Worcester