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## Gay Marriage: Who's Minding the Children?

### Jeffrey Satinover Explains Risk

By Susan Brinkmann

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The whole issue of gay marriage can be summed up in one word — children. According to Jeffrey Satinover, M. D., a psychiatrist and faculty member at Princeton University, there is no more important reason to prohibit same-sex marriage than the effects it would have on children. And he doesn't say this for sentimental reasons. He says it because it's sound science.

"In every area of life, cognitive, emotional, social, developmental ... at every phase of the life cycle ... social evidence shows that there are measurable effects when children lack either a mother or a father. ... The evidence is overwhelming. Mountains of evidence, collected over decades, show that children need both mothers and fathers."

To view some of this evidence, go to the Family Research Web site at <http://www.frc.org/get.?i=IS04C02> and read the report entitled "Comparing the Lifestyles of Homosexual Couples to Married Couples." The report lists 56 such studies, including research done by the National Center for Health Statistics, the U.S. Department of Justice, University of Chicago and peer-reviewed publications that appeared in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *Journal of Social Services Research*, and the *American Sociological Review*.

Exposure to both sexes is vitally important to the developmental needs of children because it helps them to form their sexual identity, but there are many more areas where children are affected by the parenting of a mother and father. Researcher Henry Biller, who has written several books on the subject, explains some of the key areas:

"Even if the father and mother behave in generally similar ways, they provide contrasting images for the infant ... Mothers and fathers have different verbal styles when communicating ... Involved fathers are more likely to stimulate the infant to explore and investigate new objects,

whereas mothers tend to engage their infants in relatively pre-structured and predictable activities ... The father and mother offer the child two different kinds of persons to learn about as well as providing separate sources of love and support. ..." According to science, there are hundreds of nuances about men and women that even newborn infants can readily distinguish and that make a difference in the way the child develops.

But aside from these developmental and psychological effects, there are also significant peripheral issues that come with same-sex parents that place additional risks upon children. For instance, the ramifications of the health risks and concerns about the stability of the relationship.

The breakdown of marriage in America has already had devastating effects on society, especially on children, without delivering yet another blow to this most fundamental structure of society by eliminating it entirely. If heterosexual marriage is protected, children will at least have the benefits of its stabilizing influence in their surrounding familial relationships.

This is why Satinover stresses that society's compelling interest is to ensure not only the mere propagation of the species but humankind's well-being too, which is the whole purpose of heterosexual marriage. Heterosexual marriage is a societal structure and without it, society crumbles.

And yet this is precisely what the courts are about to do. "And they're going to do it without any impact studies," Satinover said.

The same courts that demand multi-million dollar environmental studies before allowing someone to so much as dig a hole in the ground "are going to massively reshape the social landscape" without a single study being con-

ducted. And it will do so in spite of mountains of empirical evidence showing the negative effects on society that occur when the family structure breaks down.

The second point against homosexual marriage is that it doesn't just create a second societal structure, it actually "smuggles into existence ... two radically different social structures," Satinover explained.

### Three New Classes of Children

There are same-sex marriages between two women and between two men. "They have utterly different demographics, life spans, health and behavioral characteristics, and sexual behaviors. ... They are as different from one another as men are from women. If you were to create gay marriage, you end up with three totally different marital entities." We would have heterosexual marriage, female gay marriage and male gay marriage. This new set of marital structures will, in turn, produce three new classes of children.

"This third point ties the first two together," Satinover said. "We know that motherlessness has a different impact on children than fatherlessness does. Therefore, we have every reason to expect that children raised in female unions will turn out to have a different set of problems than those raised in motherless unions. These children will be different from children raised in heterosexual unions. So we will create three different classes of children."

What's worse, the government "is deliberately setting out to create two new and different classes of damaging situations. ... In spite of a mountain of evidence staring it in the face that this is surely going to have devastating effects on children."

Some years back, Satinover served as an expert witness against same-sex adoption in the Florida case, *Amer v. Johnson*. "The state of Florida wanted me to argue that the reason the ban should be upheld was because homosexuals made bad parents and I refused to do that. I said in my testimony, if two homosexuals wanted to adopt a child, I would have no objection to it if one of them was a man and one of them was a woman."

What mattered more was that the man and woman, homosexual or not, were willing to act contrary to their own desires in making the sacrifice to provide a stable home for the child. "What counts is the willingness to put one's own desires in second place. It has nothing to do with homosexuality, per se, it's the fact that if two men or two women insist on adopting a child, they thereby prove by their

insistence that they know nothing about the needs of the child and are so selfish and ignorant of what children need, that by their very insistence they prove themselves unfit to be parents."

The Florida courts decided in his favor.

Even though science clearly supports her position, the Catholic Church was vilified last summer when it issued a similar opinion in the document, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons." In it, the Church clearly stated its concern for the effects of gay marriage on society in general, and children in particular.

### Sexual Complementarity Matters

"The absence of sexual complementarity in these unions creates obstacles in the normal development of children who would be placed in the care of such persons. They would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood. Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development." The Church cites the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as asserting that the best interests of the child should be put first in these situations.

Meanwhile, the case for gay marriage continues to go forward and opens many new doors that most of us would prefer to keep closed. "Among the likeliest effects of gay marriage is to take us down a slippery slope to legalize polygamy and polyamory (group marriage)," writes Stanley Kurtz, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institute. "Marriage will be transformed into a variety of relationship contracts, linking two, three or more individuals ... in every conceivable combination of male and female.

Legalized group marriage is already well underway. There has been a rash of lawsuits filed by polygamists, and same-sex couples are already suing for the right to include in their marriage a third party who was used as either sperm donor or surrogate mother to produce a child.

Even though many of the people who are fueling this push for legalized gay marriage are acting out of genuine compassion, their sentiments are sadly misdirected. "All they can think about are the rights of the adults," Satinover said, "and the kids can go hang themselves."