

Statement from Nebraska's Three Catholic Bishops Regarding the Waters v. Ricketts decision

While we acknowledge the real human suffering of the terminally ill plaintiff in this case, we are disappointed that Judge Joseph Bataillon has presumed to nullify what God has written on human hearts since the beginning of time – marriage is between a man and a woman, and has as one of its principal purposes the procreation and rearing of children. Marriage has been established by God before the state and before the Church, and the vitality of both depends on the fruitful union of husband and wife.

The consequences of Judge Bataillon's decision are real: his injunction undermines the democratically expressed will of the people, and it undermines the role of the family in our basic social order. Marriage is the civil institution that unites children with their mothers and fathers, not just the public recognition of a committed relationship for the fulfillment of adults.

Every child has the right to know, and as far as possible, be united with his or her mother and father. Governments ought to promote marriage between a man and a woman in order to ensure that children born from their union will realize that right.

Supporting the rights of children has never been more clearly important. But rather than support the rights of children, Judge Bataillon has imposed on the people of Nebraska a new, adult-centric view of marriage.

It is appropriate that Judge Bataillon issued a stay of his decision, allowing for immediate legal recourse. We ask all Catholics and people of good will to continue to fast and pray that God's plan for marriage and family life will be affirmed.

Most Reverend George J. Lucas, Archbishop of Omaha

Most Reverend James D. Conley, Bishop of Lincoln

Most Reverend William J. Dendinger, Bishop of Grand Island