

## **PRESS RELEASE FROM PRESERVE MARRIAGE - May 5, 2017**

Today a single judge, Justice Charles Etta-Simmons, of the Supreme Court of Bermuda has decided to redefine the institution of marriage. By imposing this judgment, the court has ruled against many in the community of Bermuda. The decision has heightened the cultural divide in this country and has further fractured our society. The members of Preserve Marriage and the diverse population we represent, acknowledge the judgment of the court, but profoundly disagree with it for some of the following reasons:

The judgment is an attack on traditional marriage. It is an attack on Christian and other faith-based and traditional values. And the judgment directly undermines the diverse population of Bermuda, specifically, the over 14,100 persons who participated in the referendum. Preserve Marriage takes the position that the referendum fell short of the required votes to be official due to the fact that the Premier who called the referendum, stated publically, that it would be non-binding. This had an obvious impact on the number of people who voted. However, it does not negate the fact that the people of Bermuda clearly decided they do not want same-sex marriage because of the vast cultural change that it brings.

Contrary to what Justice Simmons ruled, the culture of Bermuda has not changed to the extent that the institution of marriage is no longer recognized as being between a man and a woman.

This decision has taken Bermuda beyond the law of the European Court of Human Rights which the Human Rights Act of Bermuda must adhere to. Bermuda has now elevated same-sex marriage to a human right which is contrary to the decision of the European Court. In *Oliari and Others v. Italy*, 21 July 2015, Paragraph 192, "Article 12 of the Convention [the right to marry] does not impose an obligation on the respondent Government to grant a same-sex couple ... access to marriage." In addition, the Human Rights Commission is out of step with their responsibility to uphold the rulings of the European Court.

The redefinition of marriage in other countries has led to the reinvention of gender among children; the erosion of parenting rights to govern what their children are taught as it relates to gender and same-sex education; and the false perception that the church, faith-based organizations, and non-faith affiliated citizens who stand for traditional marriage are promoting bigotry or hate-speech.

Bermuda has now become the only country in the world to introduce same-sex marriage through the ruling of a single judge. As a result, the voices of 9,000 petitioners were ignored. The voices of 14,100 referendum voters were ignored. And the voices of our duly elected Members of Parliament were ignored.

Preserve Marriage will continue to stand for traditional marriage between a man and a woman because of its importance to the culture of Bermuda, the family and most critically the children. Truth has no expiration date. We firmly believe that the redefinition of marriage leads to an exponential cultural shift in the future of Bermuda and the children that will be raised on these Islands.

We firmly believe that to uphold the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman in Bermuda is not hateful nor bigotry. We will continue to boldly speak the truth on this matter and will consider all options going forward.