



**Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage
Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty**

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017 • PHONE: 202-541-3000

September 20, 2013

Representative Raúl Labrador
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Labrador,

As the respective chairmen of the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage and the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, we write in strong support of your bill, H.R. 3133, the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act. As you know, persons who understand marriage to be the union of one man and one woman are increasingly having their religious liberties jeopardized and even forfeited. For instance, there are efforts to remove the tax-exempt status of some organizations – including religious organizations – unless they violate their faith beliefs and moral convictions regarding human sexuality. Additionally, business owners are being told that they cannot operate a business without violating their faith beliefs and moral convictions about marriage. Sadly, some who promote marriage redefinition do not embrace the coexistence and tolerance of different ideas in a pluralistic society but wish to impose a policy of “comply or else.”

This legislation would provide significant protection for religious liberty at the federal level and would be an important first step in extending conscience protection to individuals and organizations who understand marriage as the union of one man and one woman. In a host of areas, the Act would simply prevent the federal government from discriminating against these individuals and organizations. In a climate of increasing intolerance, these protections are much needed.

The teaching of the Catholic Church about marriage is based on both faith and reason. Using right reason, one can know that given the nature of the human person, created as male and female, marriage is the union of one man and one woman. The Church will continue to seek to promote and protect the natural truth of marriage as foundational to the common good.

We are pleased to support the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act, and we urge your colleagues to join H.R. 3133 as cosponsors.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco
USCCB Subcommittee for the Promotion
and Defense of Marriage

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore
USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious
Liberty