



## **New Group Brings Together Right and Left, Gays and Straights, to Fight Marriage Gap**

*Goal to "Make Marriage Achievable for All Who Seek It"*

**WASHINGTON (Feb. 23, 2015)** –Today, 103 U.S. scholars and leaders released a [public statement](#), *Marriage Opportunity: The Moment for National Action*, and announced the formation of the Marriage Opportunity Council, whose goal is to make marriage achievable for all Americans, regardless of social class or sexual orientation.

The statement is [published in full](#) as the cover essay in the new issue of *The Washington Monthly*.

"Even as gay Americans win the opportunity to marry, millions of others are finding that forming and sustaining a successful marriage is a goal that's slipping out of reach," said David Blankenhorn, the president of the Institute for American Values and a co-director of the initiative. "Marriage can't thrive as a gated community or an elite perquisite, and that's where it's headed if current trends don't change. The Marriage Opportunity Council represents the launch of a new kind of pro-marriage coalition in America, one that's inclusive and one that can bring us together rather than divide us."

Said initiative co-director Jonathan Rauch, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, "The time has come to end forever the conflict between gay rights and family values. We're building a new pro-family, pro-equality consensus."

*Marriage Opportunity: The Moment for National Action* brings together a broad and unprecedented coalition seeking to identify and reduce legal, social, and economic impediments to marriage. The statement asserts that:

- **Marriage, an institution that once united Americans across class lines, now increasingly divides them instead – a worrisome situation for millions of working-class and poor Americans caught in a downward spiral.**
- **Once seemingly at odds, the pro-family and pro-equality agendas have converged, because improving marriage opportunity and improving economic and social opportunity go hand in hand.**

- **The same-sex-marriage movement sends a powerful pro-family message that conservatives and liberals alike can build on to focus the nation's attention and energy on helping make marriage achievable for all who seek it.**
- **Now is a rare moment when a new consensus is possible on what for decades has been a deeply polarized issue. As the statement says, "Events of the past few years have turned the old culture war assumptions upside-down. If there ever was a conflict between social equality and family values, it is over today."**

The statement calls for economic, cultural, and public policy measures to close the marriage gap; initiatives to build on the success of gay and lesbian families; and new, inclusive research into factors that make marriage work.

The statement's founding signatories bring together former leading opponents of gay marriage as well as some of the nation's leading gay marriage advocates, prominent liberals and conservatives, current and former members of Congress and current and former editors of *The Washington Monthly*, *National Review*, *Commentary*, and *The New Republic*.

Notable signatories from these groups include Blankenhorn and Rauch, as well as Joseph Bottum, June Carbone, Christopher DeMuth, Rev. Dr. Robert Michael Franklin, Rep. Richard L. Hanna (R-NY), Kay Hymowitz, Douglas Holz-Eakin, Michael Ignatieff, Eli Lehrer, Linda McClain, Lawrence Mead, John Podhoretz, Isabel Sawhill, Justice Leah Ward Sears and Andrew Sullivan.

A [full list](#) of signatories is available on the MOC website.

*The [Marriage Opportunity Council](#) is an independent, non-partisan group of scholars and leaders who come together to develop proposals to reduce legal, social, and economic barriers to marriage. The Council's co-directors are [David Blankenhorn](#) of IAV and [Jonathan Rauch](#) of the Brookings Institution.*

Contact: Alicia Savarese  
(212) 246-3942  
[Alicia@americanvalues.org](mailto:Alicia@americanvalues.org)

###