

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Senators move forward on bipartisan Respect for Marriage Act with protections for religious liberties

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Rob Portman (R-OH), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), and Thom Tillis (R-NC) released the following statement on moving forward with the *Respect for Marriage Act*:

“The Respect for Marriage Act is a needed step to provide millions of loving couples in same-sex and interracial marriages the certainty that they will continue to enjoy the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities afforded to all other marriages. Through bipartisan collaboration, we’ve crafted commonsense language to confirm that this legislation fully respects and protects Americans’ religious liberties and diverse beliefs, while leaving intact the core mission of the legislation to protect marriage equality. We look forward to this legislation coming to the floor and are confident that this amendment has helped earn the broad, bipartisan support needed to pass our commonsense legislation into law.”

The Senators’ bipartisan amendment:

- Protects all religious liberty and conscience protections available under the Constitution or Federal law, including but not limited to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and prevents this bill from being used to diminish or repeal any such protection.
- Confirms that non-profit religious organizations will not be required to provide any services, facilities, or goods for the solemnization or celebration of a marriage.

- Guarantees that this bill may not be used to deny or alter any benefit, right, or status of an otherwise eligible person or entity – including tax-exempt status, tax treatment, grants, contracts, agreements, guarantees, educational funding, loans, scholarships, licenses, certifications, accreditations, claims, or defenses – provided that the benefit, right, or status does not arise from a marriage. For instance, a church, university, or other nonprofit's eligibility for tax-exempt status is unrelated to marriage, so its status would not be affected by this legislation.
- Makes clear that the bill does not require or authorize the Federal government to recognize polygamous marriages.
- Recognizes the importance of marriage, acknowledges that diverse beliefs and the people who hold them are due respect, and affirms that couples, including same-sex and interracial couples, deserve the dignity, stability, and ongoing protection of marriage.

The *Respect for Marriage Act* is a narrow but important bill that would do two primary things:

- First, it would require the federal government to recognize a marriage between two individuals if the marriage was valid in the state where it was performed.
- Second, the bill would guarantee that valid marriages between two individuals are given full faith and credit, regardless of the couple's sex, race, ethnicity, or national origin, but the bill would not require a State to issue a marriage license contrary to state law.

A one-pager on the amendment is available [here](#) and full text is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).