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## The Challenge We Face

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The challenge of defending marriage as the union of a man and a woman was on full public display on November 4. The immediate news was very encouraging indeed. Voters in Arizona, Florida, and California all passed measures defending marriage and prohibiting same-sex marriages in their states. These three states, added to the over twenty others that had already passed similar constitutional amendments or similar provisions, have made a massive public statement in support of marriage.

Without question, that is good news. The vote in California was especially significant, as Proposition 8 allowed the citizens of the nation's most populous state to take the issue back from the state's Supreme Court, which had arrogantly usurped the authority of the people in a 4/3 decision back in May. The 52-48 vote was a clear win for marriage, and a geographical vote distribution chart shows that same-sex marriage has support mainly in the Bay area of San Francisco and neighboring communities. The win in Florida was important because the measure needed 60 percent of the votes in order to pass. It received 62 percent of the votes cast. The Arizona vote was similarly significant — in this case because that state had been the only state to date to have turned down a similar measure in a previous election.



Nevertheless, legal challenges were quickly filed in California. The most threatening of these asks the California Supreme Court to rule the measure as unconstitutional because it “revises” rather than “amends” the state's constitution. The claim is specious, but so was the argument accepted by the court back in May. This much is clear — any court that would overrule a mandate from the people in this manner will undermine its own legitimacy.

In other developments, statements from two prominent politicians made news on the issue. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger encouraged same-sex marriage advocates to press ahead. He even expressed hope that the state's Supreme Court would overrule the voice of the people. “It's unfortunate, obviously, but it's not the end,” Schwarzenegger told CNN. “I think that we will again maybe undo that, if the court is willing to do that, and then move forward from there and again lead in that area.”

As *The Los Angeles Times* reported:

*Schwarzenegger publicly opposed Proposition 8, which amends the state Constitution to declare that “only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.”*

*On Sunday, he urged backers of gay marriage to follow the lesson he learned as a bodybuilder trying to lift weights that were too heavy for him at first. “I learned that you should never ever give up. . . . They should never give up. They should be on it and on it until they get it done .”*

What makes this especially interesting is that Schwarzenegger had run for office opposing same-sex marriage. He is not now a candidate for re-election. As the paper observed, “With his favorable comments toward gay marriage, the governor's thinking appears to have evolved on the issue.”

Meanwhile, Speaker of the House Rep. Nancy Pelosi told *The San Francisco Chronicle* that voters just have misunderstood the measure. In a stunning demonstration of political condescension, Rep. Pelosi argued: “Unfortunately,

I think people thought they were making a statement about what their view of same-sex marriage was . . . . I don't know if it was clear that this meant that we are amending the Constitution to diminish freedom in our state." If anything, the wording of the proposition, controversial in itself, makes the Speaker's point even more ludicrous. Is she seriously suggesting that the voters of her home state cannot be taken seriously when they defend marriage? It appears so.

In yet other developments, protesters marched in front of the Mormon Temple on Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles and across the street from Saddleback Community Church. The Mormon church was the largest single financial contributor to the fight for Proposition 8, and major Evangelical churches were behind the effort as well, joined by many Roman Catholics.

On the other hand, as reported in *The Los Angeles Times*:

*"We will continue to bless same-sex unions here until we can legally celebrate same-sex unions again," the Rev. Ed Bacon told 1,000 congregants during Sunday services at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, which has blessed same-sex unions for 16 years.*

*After the service, Bacon and other clergy members held a news conference on the church steps. They were surrounded by gay and lesbian couples, some standing with young children.*

*"I know these couples. I know their relationships," Bacon said, addressing a phalanx of television cameras. "They should be celebrated, rather than disparaged. . . . In the eyes of God, these people are married."*

This struggle isn't over — not even close.

