

**MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
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MCC Position on Loscocco Amendment Clarified

If the choices before legislators are to (1) approve the Travaglini-Finneran amendment thereby mandating same-sex civil unions equal to marriage, (2) adjourn without approving any amendment thereby endorsing the Goodridge decision and its mandate creating same-sex marriage, or (3) approve the Loscocco amendment reaffirming marriage as the union between one man and one woman and establishing an undefined civil union category without mandating its definition, and thus without mandating same-sex civil unions, then clearly the only good choice is the Loscocco amendment. The other two choices would be unremittingly bad.

The Loscocco amendment represents a good-faith effort by Rep. Paul Loscocco to achieve the greatest good absent sufficient votes for MA & PA. It is drafted in a manner that assuages the concerns of legislators supportive of leaving open the avenue of allowing the legislature to grant benefits to unmarried persons. Yet it does so without diverting from the over-all objective of protecting marriage's long-understood definition as the union between one man and one woman, while still preserving marriage's unique position in the law, and without adding complicating constitutional mandates concerning any other particular relationships such as those involving same-sex couples. Indeed, had Rep. Loscocco not filed his amendment at the time he did in February, during the first two days of the joint session, the Travaglini-Finneran amendment would have been voted on then and would likely have been passed. Instead, many legislators found the Loscocco amendment's approach more to their liking and began to shift away from the Travaglini-Finneran amendment, prompting a filibuster and delay by opponents.

In an earlier analysis and summary of "Where we are with MA & PA", the Massachusetts Catholic Conference referred to the Loscocco amendment as "dangerous" when compared with the original MA & PA amendment, which made no reference to civil unions at all and contained no mandate to create any other separate status. The choice of words was poor, and may have given the impression that the Loscocco amendment is a bad amendment. It is not.

In a best-of-all-worlds scenario, the Massachusetts Catholic Conference prefers the MA & PA as the better of the two good options. However, if left without recourse to the MA & PA option, and over and against the unremittingly bad consequences presented by approving the Travaglini-Finneran amendment or by doing nothing at all, the Loscocco amendment provides the best means to achieve the greatest good.

We especially regret any negative reflection caused by our poor choice of words on Rep. Loscocco's sterling integrity and yeoman service on behalf of protecting marriage.

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