

Testimony of

# **The Honorable Orrin Hatch**

September 4, 2003

Statement of Chairman Orrin G. Hatch

Before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights

Hearing on

"What is Needed to Defend the

Bipartisan Defense of Marriage Act of 1996?"

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a few years ago, I helped pass the Defense of Marriage Act to try to prevent one state from forcing another state to adopt its definition of marriage. I believed then and I continue to believe that one state should not be able to determine for another state that it must recognize same-sex marriage. There is some concern now, however, that this aspect of the legislation may not be upheld in court, and if this is this case, we need to determine what steps we need to take to ensure that the intent of the bipartisan Defense of Marriage Act is accomplished. It's very clear to me that disintegration of the family in this country correlates with many serious social problems, including crime and poverty. We are seeing too many divorces and record out-of-wedlock birth rates that have resulted in far too many fatherless families. Weakening the legal status of marriage at this point will only exacerbate these problems. I look forward to working on this important issue with my colleagues.

Thank you.

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