

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 30, 2006

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Marriage Bills Will Strengthen Michigan
House Should be Commended for Helping Families and Protecting Children

LANSING, Mich. - Brad Snavely, executive director of Michigan Family Forum, today praised Michigan House lawmakers who gave bi-partisan approval to legislation to strengthen marriages and protect children of divorce. "The debate is over," said Snavely. "Research irrefutably shows that both adults and children in healthy marriages enjoy better health, greater financial stability and engage in fewer harmful behaviors than individuals in non-married relationships or those who have been touched by divorce."

Healthy, lasting marriages enrich the lives of couples, their children and the community around them. "Marriage is not just about private, personal relationships. Strong marriages create strong families and communities which will ensure a strong and stable Michigan," said Snavely. He added that "many of the expenditures by the state are closely tied to people harmed by failed or never formed marriages. If we are serious about improving child well-being and reducing dependency on state social services, we must be committed to encouraging healthy marriages."

The bills promote pre-marital education programs, encourage clergy to be more involved in strengthening marriages and provide for the gathering of marriage education information. Additionally, the package will strengthen the safety net for children caught in broken marriages. The parents will be required to participate in a divorce impact program, cooperatively work out custody issues and ensure that the child's best interests are considered. The House and Senate passed a similar package of legislation in 2004, but Governor Granholm chose to veto the bills citing concerns about state intrusion into private relationships.

The bills will now make their way to the Senate. "We strongly encourage the Senate and Governor to pass and sign this legislation which will help strengthen marriage and protect children," said Snavely. "It's the right thing to do for all of Michigan's citizens." For more information, log on to www.michiganfamily.org.

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