



## Tim Skubick: Where do Catholics stand on gay marriage? Effort to lift Michigan ban could be telling

Tim Skubick | Politics Columnist for MLive.com By Tim Skubick | Politics Columnist for MLive.com

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As opening shots go in a soon to be nasty political war, this one was a dandy.

Michigan's ban on gay marriage remains intact after a pair of U.S. Supreme Court decisions Wednesday, though opponents may have picked up new arguments to challenge the state's voter-approved law.

Associated Press

Issue: Lifting the ban on gay marriage.

In one corner: Michigan Equality and other groups pushing for it.

In the other corner: The Michigan Catholic Conference feverishly pushing back.

Emily Dievendorf was asked about that opposition and unloaded this pithy sound bite: "We have a number of extremists groups that tend to pour money into stopping progress on equality."

Did that include the Catholic Church?

"Not necessarily the Catholic Church overall, but the Michigan Catholic Conference tends to be more on the extreme and doesn't tend to represent the interest and values of the average Catholic."

Pretty strong stuff, hey?

Paul Long of the MCC will not be amused when he reads that. He and others who favor traditional marriage were successful in 2004 writing the ban on gay marriage into the state constitution, the very constitution Ms. Dievendorf et. al. seek to amend in 2016.

She asserts that 60 percent of Catholics in Michigan are on her side.

Mr. Long and company question the polling data. He says you can "design polls to say anything you want," and he wants to know what type of Catholics were quizzed? For example, were they baptized, do they go to church every Sunday and were they confirmed or, put another way - which he did not suggest - were they Easter and Christmas church members only?

He thinks knowing all that might lower the 60 percent figure.

"We will be the extreme underdog given what's going on around the country," Mr. Long begins, "given how the media reports about the issue and we're going to be outspent by a lot of out-of-state money that's going to come in ... We'll have a tough fight on our hands."

And labeling the MCC as an extremist group suggests Ms. Dievendorf and friends are proving him right.

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