



# COMMUNIQUÉ

## Pour diffusion immédiate

*Supreme Court reference on same-sex marriage*

### “PAUL MARTIN IS SINKING INTO SOCIAL CONSERVATISM”

Ottawa, Wednesday, January 28, 2004 – The Bloc Québécois Justice Critic and MP for Charlesbourg--Jacques-Cartier, **Richard Marceau**, has denounced Paul Martin’s decision to expand the scope of the questions submitted to the Supreme Court in the reference on same-sex marriage. According to Mr Marceau, the Liberal government is attempting to duck its political responsibilities for purely vote-getting motives.

“Paul Martin wants to evade the issue of gay marriage because he's afraid of the impact on his support at the ballot box,” **Mr Marceau** said. “To satisfy his thirst for power, the Prime Minister is ready to institutionalize discrimination against homosexuals. We already know Paul Martin as the ally of George W. Bush in military matters, and as a fiscal conservative -- now we have an eloquent demonstration that he’s a social conservative as well.”

The Bloc Québécois MP also pointed out that the enlargement of the reference to the Supreme Court is not only a 180-degree turn from the Liberal government's promise not to appeal the decisions of the Ontario and British Columbia appeal courts and the ruling by the Québec Superior Court, but also constitutes in itself a disguised appeal that will have serious repercussions all over Canada.

“The federal government is playing with the idea of creating a civil union, so that it won’t have to call the union between same-sex spouses a marriage,” **Mr Marceau** explained. “This decision demonstrates two things: on the one hand, it shows how low they are willing to go to get elected, and on the other it shows what centralisers they can be. The Parliament of Canada has no jurisdiction over family law, except for marriage and divorce. In looking into the idea of a civil union, the federal government clearly wants, once again, to get its hands on provincial areas of jurisdiction.”

The House of Commons Justice Committee was given a specific mandate by the then Justice Minister, Martin Cauchon, to investigate this matter in depth. Hearings were held all across Canada, and the Committee concluded that the traditional definition of marriage was discriminatory. “Decisions by three courts in as many provinces have confirmed this interpretation, and the government must stop dodging the issue and take official cognizance of the way the law is evolving,” **Richard Marceau** concluded.

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Information :

Karine Sauvé, Media Officer  
Bloc Québécois Caucus  
Tel.: (613) 947-2495  
Cell: (613) 296-1596  
[www.blocquebecois.org](http://www.blocquebecois.org)