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Bishops call on house to defend DOMA

by NCR Staff



Same-sex couple embrace during marriage ceremony in Washington March 9, 2010. (CNS/Reuters)

WASHINGTON -- The Obama Administration's decision to forgo defense of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) "has undermined the rule of law and the separation of powers," religious leaders including Atlanta Archbishop Wilton Gregory said in a March 4 letter to House Speaker John Boehner.

"We urge the House of Representatives to take leadership in defending DOMA in the federal courts," said the letter. "Specifically, we ask that the House intervene as a party in all cases where DOMA is challenged, not merely to file *amicus curiae* briefs. Though such action would be unusual, it would be both lawful and warranted under our current legal system and political context."

The Catholic leaders signing the letter included Gregory, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and Bishop Salvatore Cordileone of Oakland, California, chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Defense of Marriage.

Other religious leaders signing the letter include Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, Glenn C. Burris, president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel;

Archbishop Robert Duncan of the Anglican Church in North America, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and Tarunjit Singh, secretary general of the World Sikh Council-America Region.

The text of the letter can be found here. [Interfaith Group Urges Speaker of the House to Defend DOMA Legislation in Court](#)

The letter to Boehner follows a March 3 statement from New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, president of the U.S. bishops conference. "Our nation and government have the duty to recognize and protect marriage, not tamper with and redefine it, nor to caricature the deeply held beliefs of so many citizens as "discrimination," said Dolan.

The Dolan statement can be found here: [Dolan: Refusal to Defend Defense of Marriage Act an "Alarming and Grave Injustice"](#).

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