

Welcome to the the City of Atwood, Kansas.

An open letter to the Citizens of Atwood.

I sincerely apologize that I cannot represent Atwood anymore. I am completely disappointed and heartbroken (for lack of a better word) at the actions of my hometown, a community that always says how much it cares for others.

You know when I first created AtwoodKansas.com I did so because of my desire to do everything I could to save my hometown from dying like so many other Midwestern towns.

Even though when I grew up there, I was not treated very well, I still had a love for my hometown that only grew stronger as I grew up. Living in a metro area with 7 million people really makes you understand what the word "home" means.

I hear a lot of stereotypical things said about Kansas when people find out where I am from, and every time I stick up for my "home" because I knew that the people making those remarks didn't really know anything about Kansas. They had no idea that Kansas is not "so flat that when your dog runs away you can see him for 3 days", they certainly did not know what it is like to experience sweet smell of alfalfa in the summer or what it's like to run into the middle of a dust before it disappears. The majority think of Kansans as Redneck farmers who are racist, bigoted, un-educated, and "slow". I would tell them otherwise.

However, the Citizens of Atwood certainly lived up to a few of those stereotypes this past week! Way to go!

I've never kept it a secret that I'm gay, so it makes me wonder if Atwood would have accepted my gift that made Atwood the 8th city in Kansas to have a world class website and the 5th newspaper in the state to have a website, knowing that the person who made it was gay? Or would they just let the town wither and die to make spite themselves and feel holy?

I did not have a choice to be gay. How do I know it was not a choice for me? Simple, because I knew by the time I was 5. So unless a 5 year old knows that he wants to be ostracized, singled out, hated, threatened, and condemned just for being different, there is no way it is a choice. Those of you who went to school with me throughout Elementary and Junior High knew also because you would call me "fag" or "gay wad" and a few of you would even beat me up regularly until I out grew you.

So either my brain was so advanced that at 5 years old, that I subconsciously made a choice to become gay or it was hardwired into my brain at birth. Now by the time I finished High School, even though I knew I was gay, I tried to hide it and I had a lot of girl friends. But in my heart I knew, it did not feel right.

Now since I know I'm now going to be the topic of many Gossip-mongers in Atwood, I'll respond to a few things before more rumors get spread. Lets address the stereotype you have probably have of me because I'm Gay.

- I do not have Aids, nor any other sexually transmitted disease of any kind.
- I do not molest children. In fact, more child molestations have been committed by Catholic Priests and Heterosexual men than by homosexuals.
- Most of you probably think because I'm gay I'm a "nelly" queen, or a sissy. In fact, most gay men are NOT Nelly in the least bit, some are, but I've heard A LOT of straight men in Kansas with voices so high they could sing soprano in the Church choir.
- I don't wear women's clothing, talk like woman, nor do I act like a woman.
- I do not sleep with every guy I meet. I've have a partner of 13 years. (how many people my age in Kansas can say that they've been with the same person for 13 years?) Sure they are some that do, but the same can be said for Heterosexuals. Some people in Atwood could have their own page in the phone book.
- Gays, do NOT lust after every Heterosexual man. This is a common misconception by Straight men who think that ALL Gay men want them. NOT TRUE!

For those of you who think it is a choice, that would mean at one time you had considered becoming a homosexual. It would be nice to hear your story.

I know that Atwood Voters made their decision based on the information put in front of them by the sponsors and backers of the Amendment rather than research on their own. They took the word of people who dedicate 100% of time and resources to oppression of Gay people. Did you know that Sponsors & Backers of this Amendment spent more money on this campaign than the entire budget of ALL the school districts that make up the NWKL. Imagine if they put that money to good use and gave it to education in the first place, we might not be in this mess today.

All of this is for what? To "Protect the Sanctity of Marriage"? Please

explain how a gay person has affected your marriage, your ability to get married or your family? What can 2 gay people in love do to the Sanctity of Marriage that hasn't already been done by the likes of Elizabeth Taylor, Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, Julia Roberts, the city of Las Vegas or shows like "Who Wants to marry a Millionaire", "the Bachelor", "the Bachelorette", "Will you marry my Daddy", or even the people of Rawlins County who have been married, gotten divorced, remarried, divorced and yet again remarried? The Sanctity of Marriage means that you marry someone, spend the rest of your life in a committed Union of two. It has nothing to do with sex or sexual orientation, it's a lifelong commitment. Why should you care if 2 people next door or 50 miles away want to spend the rest of their lives together and get the same benefits you enjoy, it's not going to affect you in the least bit, unless you spy on them. If you don't like what's on Television, you change the channel, you don't get the Government to ban the show.

Examples of what this Amendment causes:

Example 1:

- A guy and girl meet at a party. They decide to get married 1 day later. The guy is in an car accident on the way to work the next morning and is in a coma at the hospital. The girl he has known for 48 hours has the legal right to make decisions for his care. She decides to pull the plug. He dies. Everything he owns becomes property of the girl he knew for 2 days.

Example 2:

- Two guys have been in a committed relationship for 75 years. Their home, the cars, everything is listed in both of their names. Their bank accounts are joint accounts, everything is shared. One of the guys gets sick and goes into a coma in the hospital. The other guy cannot visit him in the hospital because he is not family. The hospital contact family that has not spoken to the guy in the coma for 20 years because he is gay. They decide to pull the plug. The Government says the Estate must be sold, the cars must be sold, the bank accounts liquidated, everything that had the guys name on it becomes part of the Estate and is taxed at 60%! Of which, the family that has not spoken to him for 20 years will get ½, leaving the partner of 75 years with very little of the estate that they built and paid for together for 75 years. The remaining partner now becomes a burden to tax payers who will have to pay for his medical expenses, his housing subsidies, etc.

Example 3:

- A married couple (male & female) file jointly on their income tax. They paid \$10,000.00 in income tax, but they rent so they didn't pay property tax. Based on their combined income of \$75,000 and the fact that they file jointly, they receive a refund of \$4000.00
- A gay couple cannot file jointly, so each files individually. Guy 1 makes \$75,000. and pays 10,000 in taxes. Guy 2 makes 75,000. and pays 10,000 in taxes. They own their home and pay an additional \$8000.00 in property tax and \$24000.00 in interest on the mortgage. Since the property tax and mortgage interest can only be claimed by 1 person we'll give it to guy #2. Guy #1, files as a single and has to pay an additional \$3000.00 in taxes because the deduction for a single person is less. Guy #2 made \$75,000. and paid \$8000.00 in property tax and \$24000.00 in mortgage interest. Guy number 2 gets a \$1900.00 refund.

If gays are taxed the same, we should be entitled to the same representation & benefits. Gays pay property taxes for your children to go to school, they pay the same taxes as you, yet they end up paying more in taxes than you do. So perhaps the tax laws should be changed since clearly there is taxation w/out representation. What's next? We have to sit in the back of the Bus, or drink from separate water fountains.

The people who sponsored this Amendment made most of their argument based on 1 passage in Leviticus that says, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is an abomination". Now I agree, that Leviticus does indeed say this. However if we hold this one passage in the bible as truth, we must hold everything in the bible as truth, so in reality the new Amendment passed by Kansans, as defined by the bible should read like this:

- Marriage in the Kansas shall consist of a union between one man and one or more women.
 - Marriage shall not impede a man's right to take concubines in addition to his wife or wives.
 - A marriage shall be considered valid only if the wife is a virgin. If the wife is not a virgin, she shall be executed by public stoning.
 - Marriage of a believer and a non-believer shall be forbidden.
 - Since marriage is for life, neither this Constitution nor the

constitution of any State, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to permit divorce.

- If a married man dies without children, his brother shall marry the widow. If he refuses to marry his brother's widow or deliberately does not give her children, he shall pay a fine of one shoe and be otherwise punished in a manner to be determined by law.

This is supported by passages from:

DEUTERONOMY 22: 13-21

If it is discovered that a bride is not a virgin, the Bible demands that she be executed by stoning.

- DEUTERONOMY 22: 22

If a married person has sex with someone else's husband or wife, the Bible commands that both adulterers be stoned to death.

- MARK 10: 1-12

Divorce is strictly forbidden in both Testaments, as is remarriage of anyone who has been divorced.

- LEVITICUS 18: 19

The Bible forbids a married couple from having sexual intercourse during a woman's period. If they disobey, both shall be executed.

- MARK 12: 18-27

If a man dies childless, his widow is ordered by biblical law to have intercourse with each of his brothers in turn until she bears her deceased husband a male heir.

- DEUTERONOMY 25: 11-12

If a man gets into a fight with another man and his wife seeks to rescue her husband, her hand shall be cut off and no pity shall be shown her.

It is easy to see based on the information provided by the backers of this Amendment where some would get the belief that it is wrong to be gay. However, the backers neglected to mention that Leviticus also prohibits: Round haircuts, tattoos, working on the Sabbath, wearing garments of mixed fabrics, eating pork or shellfish, getting your fortune told, and even playing with the skin of a pig. (There goes football! You might as well tear down Massacre Canyon now!)

Jesus *himself*, NEVER mentions homosexuality in the bible? In fact there are several places in the bible that appear to condone it.

The Bible describes three close relationships between two people of the same gender. They appear to have progressed well beyond a casual friendship. The individuals are:

- Ruth and Naomi
 - Ruth 1: 16-17 and 2: 10-11 describe their close friendship. Perhaps the best known passage from this book is Ruth 1: 16-17:
"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."

Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." (NIV)

- David and Jonathan
 - 1 Samuel 18:1
 - "...Jonathan became one in spirit with David and he loved him as himself." (NIV)
 - "...the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (KJV)
 - 1 Samuel 18:2
 - "From that day, Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house." (NIV)
 - 1 Samuel 18:3-4
 - "And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt." (NIV) - now you all know they didn't wear any underwear in those days right?
 - 1 Samuel 18:20-21
 - "Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law, in the one of the twain." (KJV)
 - 1 Samuel 20:41
 - "After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together - but David wept the most."
 - 2 Samuel 1:26
 - "I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women."
- Daniel and Ashpenaz
 - Daniel 1:9
 - "Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs" (KJV)

Those who sponsored Kansas Marriage Amendment are telling you only half the story. The Amendment, as passed by the Kansas Senate, could deny all unmarried couples, regardless of sexual orientation, the right to enter into private agreements that might "resemble" marriage. The implications of this are far-reaching and are just being felt in other states with similar Amendments. You could be in danger of losing your medical power of attorney, access to protection from abuse orders, special child care arrangements, hospital visitation, employee health insurance benefits, and more.

What it Says

- **A.** The marriage contract is to be considered in law as a civil contract. Marriage shall be constituted by one man and one woman only. All other marriages are declared to be contrary to the public policy of this state and are void.
- **B.** No relationship, other than a marriage, shall be recognized by the state as entitling the parties to the rights or incidents of marriage.

How will the Amendment change Kansas?

- **Paragraph A will have no effect on Kansas.** Kansas law already defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman. Same-sex marriage has been illegal in Kansas since 1867. The laws defining marriage have held up to a great deal of legal scrutiny and are in no danger of being overturned.
- **The hidden agenda of Paragraph B**
Paragraph B is an unprecedented attack on the rights of Kansans. It takes away your right to enter into any private relationship that doesn't meet the extremists' definition of marriage. Independent legal scholars have said that Paragraph B will leave Kansas courts unable to enforce any agreements between partners, including heterosexuals, who are unmarried. This ban on all relationships other than marriage is a dangerous attack on the basic rights of all Kansans, gay or straight.
- **The Unintended Consequences**
In other states, language used in similar Amendments has been used to restrict legal contracts associated with relationships. Although these Amendments were sold to the public as bans on gay marriage, they've been used to challenge legal relationships between all unmarried couples.
 - In Utah, language in that state's marriage Amendment is being used to deny "Protection from Abuse" orders to unmarried heterosexual victims of domestic violence ('Attorney Cites Amendment 3 in Fighting Protection Order', Associated Press, Nov. 15, 2004).
 - In Michigan, the State has cancelled provisions of a previously negotiated contract with the SEIU which provided health care benefits to partners of state workers (Press Release, Human Rights Campaign, Dec. 2, 2004).
 - In Ohio, unmarried heterosexual couples are having problems exercising medical powers of attorney. The Ohio Amendment has been interpreted to bar any unrelated person from having medical power of attorney for another ('Marriage Amendment's Impact Felt Around Ohio', Connie Cartmell, Marietta Times, OH, Dec. 18, 2004).

In short, your taxpayer dollars will be used for judges to make decisions regarding the effects of the new Amendment. This Amendment was proposed by the Right Wing Fundamentalists for one reason: as a litmus test to single out Kansans that they can't bend to their every whim. They have chosen a minority scapegoat to blame for all the problems they believe they see in today's society. The backers of this Amendment will not rest until everyone who disagrees with them is silent; not until ***"the minority voice has been silenced by the majority," according to Jerry Johnston, one of this Amendment's prominent backers.***

It seems like our forefathers had the great sense to know that Religion has no place in Government. Even back then, they knew that every religion was different, that what one person believes, is not always going to be what the other believes, that not everyone will worship the same God. They knew the only way to guarantee the the Citizens of the United States were treated equally was to write into law that there had to be a separation of Church and State.

As a result, the separation of Church and State would predicate that religion has no place in our Constitution. It most certainly should not be used to create Governmental polices which become laws whose only purpose is to deny a certain group of people the equal protections guaranteed by the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Since every action has an equal and opposite reaction, the ramifications and cost of this vote for the city of Atwood are:

- \$150,000 current value of a donation that was to be made from my estate to the 2nd Century fund at the time of my death, which at the time of fruition could have been well over \$500,000.
- Loss of your award winning world class website right before your national debut on News Channels around the country.
- The worst one of all, your reputation as a place where people care.

Going forward I sincerely hope that the Citizens of Atwood will research issues they know nothing about and realize that if they just think about things they won't have to rely on those who are trying to oppress others solely for the reason that they are different. For the first time, Kansas now has a Constitution that denies certain rights to a certain group of people, which to me sounds like a giant step backwards reminiscent of racism.

I am sad to say that I will no longer consider Atwood my hometown. The next time someone makes a joke about Kansans being Rednecks,

Hypocrites, etc. I will not defend it. Instead I'll say, "you're right".

On that note, I'll bid you farewell and wish you the best of luck in trying to keep your little town alive and leave with you some quotes from 600+ emails (of which only 7 were negative) I have received in response to the deletion of the Atwood website. Hopefully now you'll know what those who either lived in, been to, or have ties to Atwood really think about it, I found them very eye opening!, I think you will too.

Here are couple of quotes:

- "I actually have always referred to the mindset in Atwood as "crazy redneck farmer bigotry"
- "I remember Atwood as the most diabolically hypocritical and cruel place I have ever known."
- "I enjoyed my childhood in NW Kansas but all of my bad memories come from that town exactly because of the issues you bring up."
- "Fortunately, not all small towns are like Atwood... I've been there! Good luck, and keep up the well deserved skewering!"
- "My family lived in Atwood for 6 years in the late 80's and early 90's and now we live in (town deleted by the webmaster) and everyone here thinks of Atwood as Ratwood. I remember going into Curriers and hearing people talk about my Mother's pregnancy saying it was going to be "a nigger baby", even though they did not know who the father of my Mothers new baby was. I hate that town"
- "Forgive them lord, for they know not what they do."

The last line says it all doesn't it. Now since you have Judged, the 900+ of you will need to start thinking of your answers to say to God when he asks you why you did that. Some of you a lot sooner than others.

Let me leave you with this. When you go to Church, ask for the answers. And ask "Dear lord, please forgive me for I am about to leave this service and stand directly outside of the doors to your house for the next half hour and Gossip, bear false witness against my neighbors and Judge those who I don't like, and those who are different than I am".

Peace, Love and Happiness,

Daniel

Anyone wishing to comment may [click here](#) to send me an email, but be warned, it may be posted on this website. And since you know who I am, don't be scared to sign your real name.