

From: Molly Criner [mailto:irionclerk@gmail.com]

Sent: Sunday, July 05, 2015 7:45 PM

To: Molly Criner

Subject: From your fellow Irion County clerk

Dear Fellow Clerks,

Almost three years ago, I joined the ranks of county clerks in Texas. One thing that impressed me about the group was the superior level of dedication and professionalism. I was proud to become part of a family of officials whose members endeavored to follow the law to the best of their ability.

In the wake of the Supreme Court ruling of June 26 in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, I, like many of you, was dismayed and unsure of my constitutional duties concerning marriage licenses in Texas. However, after reading the ruling of June 26 and the dissenting opinions for myself, I have become convinced that the justices of the Supreme Court acted outside and against the authority granted to them by the very Constitution that we have sworn to uphold.

I'm no constitutional scholar, but I've studied American history enough to remember that our founding fathers were fearful of too much power in the hands of a few. Consequently, they created a Constitutional Republic in which authority to rule belonged to the PEOPLE, to be exercised through their elected representatives. In that Constitution, the Supreme Court was given the authority to expound the law, not rewrite it or remake it.

This court – or at least five members of it – seems to me to have violated that constitutional authority. Their decision appears to be so far outside the Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment that it can't be considered lawful by "we the people". In addition, two of the justices violated federal law by not recusing themselves when they had a personal prejudice in the case.

As a country, it's inherent in our very DNA to stand against unlawful seizures of power that violate our God given rights and liberty. The *Obergefell* decision looks like just such a seizure. It went beyond the judge's confined duty of interpreting the written Constitution and established precedents and instead redefined marriage in the way they would like it to be. Natural marriage can be recognized by government, but it cannot be redefined without stepping out of the bounds of nature and nature's God, who was recognized at the founding of our nation as the very source of our liberties.

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I have great respect for my fellow clerks. I know that you have all taken this matter seriously. Not a few of you have, happily or unhappily, come to the conclusion that to keep your oath, you must uphold the Supreme Court ruling.

I have come to the opposite conclusion: to keep my oath to uphold the Constitution, I must reject this ruling that I believe is lawless. It's a scary thing to do, but I believe strongly that I have to stand for the Constitution and the rule of law. I hold no animosity toward anyone with a different view. Nor do I hold any animosity toward any couple who sought this ruling for their personal lives.

Still, I must do what I believe is right. I hope that you county clerks who believe as I do will stand alongside me. I am sincerely calling for the support of the citizens of Texas and of Irion County. I am imploring the Texas Legislature to exercise its authority under the 9th and 10th Amendments and reject this ruling as being without authority.

I have attached a document that more specifically enumerates my concerns.

With great respect for my fellow clerks,

Molly Criner

Irion County/District Clerk

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