

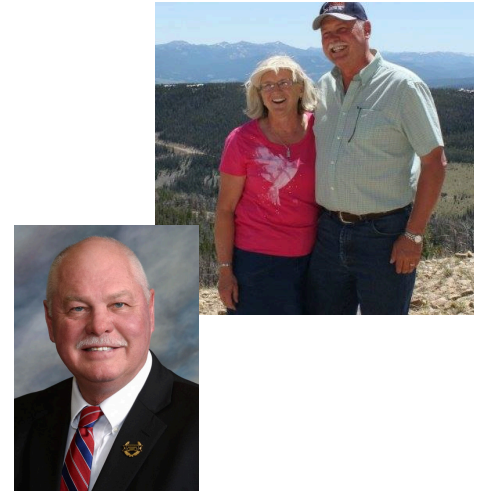
Three Legislative Families

Representative Gary Cammack

*Committee Remarks, House State Affairs
HB1154 public hearing, January 29, 2024*

“I think that this legislation is well intended, but I think there are circumstances that we should not get in the way of a marriage of a person that is 16 or 17. The safeguards are built into the existing law.”

“I have a little personal experience, my bride of 52 years was 17 years old when we got married. She had graduated from highschool, and like I said, I think it stuck – it’s 52 years, we’ve got 4 sons and 10 grandkids.”



Representative John Sjaarda

Personal Remarks

“My wife and I got married at 19 years old and have no regrets after 28 years. Our son is following in our footsteps and is currently engaged to his 17 year old fiancé. They have been dating for 2 1/2 years and are best friends and we support them getting into a God honoring life long commitment of marriage at a young age”

-John

“We have known our future daughter in law’s family for over 20 years. When our kids started dating we had no idea we’d be planning a wedding this summer. When their relationship became serious, our son asked for their daughter’s hand in marriage. We were all in favor of these two getting married at a young age.”

-Kaye



Representative Randy Gross

Personal letter to Senate Judiciary Committee

February 5, 2025

I am writing to express my concerns about SB156 as I understand it has been assigned to you on the Senate Judiciary Committee. In short, I see no beneficial reason for the change this bill brings.

I speak from personal experience as 25 years ago I went to the courthouse and signed a consent form for our youngest daughter to marry before she turned 18.

Contrary to our beliefs and what we taught, our daughter became pregnant via her high school sweetheart who she had known for many years. She then made the right decision - to remain pregnant and raise the baby. This young by age but mature in nature couple wanted to be married.

Because of our ability/willingness to consent they were married and remain happily so to this day. Our daughter finished high school and has obtained her bachelor's degree with honors. She now works in a public school. Her husband attended Gonzaga University on a ROTC scholarship, worked multiple jobs while in school and just recently retired from the U.S. Army as a Lt. Colonel. They have lived and served our country in numerous locations around the U.S. and world and have three wonderful children - each successful in their own way. Their entire family is a joy to all who know them.

Without the option of legal marriage how might our situation have evolved? One can only speculate, but I am sure the odds of a successful relationship are significantly reduced. Unmarried couples lack commitment and the legal ability to conduct daily business affairs as a couple.

Many of our earlier ancestors living on the South Dakota prairie married at a young age and succeeded, resulting in the great state we enjoy today.

Please remember the success stories and vote NO on SB 156.

Randy Gross

