



The Natural Family: A Universal Definition

With Supportive Language From The United Nations and President Obama

The definition of the “natural family” derives from the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948 and binding on all United Nations member states of the world. The UDHR states (Article 16:3), “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state.” Furthermore, UDHR states, “men and women of full age, without any limitation, due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.” This is the inspiration for the term, “natural family,” used by The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society and the World Congress of Families. The specific universal definition of the natural family comes from a diverse, multi-cultural and inter-faith working group of the World Congress of Families, crafted in May, 1998, in a Second Century B.C. room in the ancient city of Rome.

The natural family is the fundamental social unit, inscribed in human nature, and centered around the voluntary union of a man and a woman in a lifelong covenant of marriage for the purposes of:

1. **satisfying the longings of the human heart to give and receive love;**
2. **welcoming and ensuring the full physical and emotional development of children;**
3. **sharing a home that serves as the center for social, educational, economic, and spiritual life;**
4. **building strong bonds among the generations to pass on a way of life that has transcendent meaning;**
5. **extending a hand of compassion to individuals and households whose circumstances fall short of these ideals.**

The societal importance of the “natural family” is supported by the experience of history, data from science and social science research, worldwide cultural traditions, and people of diverse religious faith. U.S. President Barack Obama emphasized this universal truth of the “natural family” during a speech on fatherhood,

“We also need families to raise our children. We need fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception. We need them to realize that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child - it's the courage to raise one.” Furthermore, President Obama cited the statistics supporting the “natural family” and the need for mothers and fathers at home with their children, “We know the statistics –

- *that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime;*
- *nine times more likely to drop out of schools and*
- *twenty times more likely to end up in prison.*

They are more likely to have behavioral problems, or run away from home, or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it...And what I've realized is that life doesn't count for much unless you're willing to do your small part to leave our children - all of our children - a better world.”

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