

# AS THE FAMILY, SO THE STATE

Speech given Friday, April 4, 2008  
as part of

THE FUTURE WISCONSIN CONFERENCE 2008

**Julaine K. Appling, CEO**  
WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL



# AS THE FAMILY, SO THE STATE

**Speech given Friday, April 4, 2008**  
**as part of THE FUTURE WISCONSIN CONFERENCE 2008**  
**Julaine K. Appling, CEO**  
**WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL**

Thank you for this opportunity. I appreciate the invitation from the organizers to speak to this important issue. Thanks for being here this evening as we kick off this year's Future Wisconsin Conference.

I don't know about you, but after this week's elections, I'm pretty confident that the conservative movement is quite alive and well here in Wisconsin. We just have to have something worthy of firing us up! My hope and prayer is that we remain aware and vigilant and willing to be involved because, as never before, Wisconsin's best natural resource—bar none—weighs in the balance—and that resource is her natural or traditional families.

At the outset tonight I want to openly and candidly admit that I am a social conservative—and beyond that, I am a Christian social conservative. Frankly, it's from a Christian worldview that that I make my decisions, view life, and weigh the messages I hear during political campaigns and legislative sessions.

With that disclaimer, here's what I know to be true: I have never met a social conservative who is not also a fiscal conservative. It's simply part of the package because we have a fundamental understanding that government should live within its means—and not encroach unduly on the means of our families. However, I have met many fiscal conservatives—those among the conservative ranks whose sole issue is economic in nature—who are not social conservatives.

These folks tend to shy away from the issues that are not politically correct—such as preserving human life from conception to natural death, strengthening and preserving natural marriage, and stopping the proliferation of pornography, to name a few. These are not “warm and fuzzy” issues. They aren't always easy or pleasant to talk about in the public arena. Frankly, they aren't “safe.” In other words, you can't talk about these things and not make any number of people upset with you. So, instead, often even our conservative friends take the proverbial “hear nothing, see nothing, speak nothing” politically correct position on these issues. Sad to say, it isn't even very politically correct any more to talk about the natural family, which often keeps our fiscal conservatives silent on that issue as well.

So this message, while it will likely be of value to social conservatives, is really a clarion call to our fiscal conservative friends. The basic premise is that the economic condition of Wisconsin is directly related to its social condition. To boil it down, when Wisconsin's best natural resource is an endangered species, Wisconsin's economy will suffer collectively, a suffering that will ultimately extend to you and me individually.

As Wisconsin citizens—and as conservatives—we say we want a better economy; we want our free market, our free enterprise system to flourish; we want an education system that actually educates our kids and provides parents more options; we want a health care system that actually works; we want fiscal responsibility and accountability from our elected officials at every level; we want taxes in line with our personal realities; and we want an economic climate that promotes business and commerce because we know that our individual prosperity is closely related to healthy businesses and industries.

I, too, want all of that—however I want none of that on the backs of our best natural resource. Rather, I propose to you tonight that the most important activity Wisconsin can undertake will result in helping to ensure that all of those things I just listed become realities.

To ensure a healthy and prosperous Wisconsin, we must have strong natural families. For surely, as the family, so the state. The state of the family dictates the state of the state. We see it repeatedly worked out in our everyday lives. We just don't always connect the dots. That's what I hope to do tonight—connect some important dots regarding Wisconsin's best natural resource.

As we begin, let's define natural or traditional family. For this definition we don't need a dictionary or a government glossary—because the foundational unit of society, the family, was not the creation of man and certainly not of government. Rather, we go to our roots. Our Creator defined family for us in the model He gave with the first male human, Adam, and the first female human, Eve, the two of whom He called “husband” and “wife,” and of whom His Son, Jesus Christ, said, “What God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Adam and Eve were commissioned with one primary task in the Garden of Eden: replenish the earth—and that's one thing they did right—and you and I are here tonight as proof that in this instance they did as they were told!

The natural family then is a married mom and dad and any of their biological or adopted children. That is the gold standard, the ideal. Of course, we deal with reality—situations where the ideal has been fractured—through death or necessary divorce. These families need our compassion and our help

and support. But the gold standard remains, and whenever we as a society or whenever government begins trying to create another gold standard for family, we all reap the whirlwind those attempts create.

Make no mistake that efforts to remove the natural family as the gold standard are afoot everywhere, every day—from family law to legislatures and governor’s offices, from the media to Hollywood—the forces and the money are there pushing overtly and subtly to remove the tried and true, God-designed definition of family!

Because strong families begin with strong marriages, it is important to understand the benefits that natural marriage, that is marriage between one man and one woman, brings. And please note, these benefits happen, with only rare exceptions, irrespective of socio-economic demographics.

One of the best succinct sources I have found to summarize the benefits of marriage is a publication by the Institute for American Values. Their second edition of *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-six Conclusions from the Social Sciences* is a report on a review, analysis and synthesis of the social science literature and research on marriage—work done by noted scholars and social science experts. The information on the benefits I’m giving you tonight is largely taken from this publication.

First of all, make no mistake. Marriage is not just a private relationship between two people. Marriage has a public component and is, in general, a social good—and that’s why these benefits occur.

Let’s begin with physical health. Social science statistics continue to show that children who live with their own two married parents enjoy better physical health, on average, than do children in other family forms. Infant mortality risks drop sharply when a child is born to a married mom and dad. Both married adults and teens in intact families have reduced rates of alcohol and substance abuse. Children growing up with their married moms and dads delay sexual activity. Married people, especially men, tend to live longer than those in other situations. Married men and women have, on average, better health and lower rates of injury, illness and disability—including among the minorities and poor, although that correlation has not been as thoroughly examined.

As marriage relates to mental health and emotional well-being, we continue to see benefits, including children in intact families having lower rates of psychological distress and mental illness. Marriage appears to also significantly reduce the risk of suicide. Married moms have lower rates of depression than do single or cohabiting moms. Boys reared with their married

moms and dads are less likely to engage in delinquent and criminal behavior. Marriage also reduces the risk that adults will be either perpetrators or victims of crime. Marriage also appears to reduce the risk of domestic violence for women. Children in intact families are at much less risk for experiencing child abuse, both physical and sexual.

And in the economic realm, marriage significantly decreases the risk of poverty for both children and their mothers. Married couples on average build more wealth than singles or cohabiting couples. Minorities benefit economically from marriage, as well. Married men earn more money than do single men with similar education and job histories. Children from intact families are more likely to succeed in school, graduate from college and achieve high-status jobs. Married men, on average, are better employees, than men in other relationship situations.

By now, you ought to be hearing cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching! My goodness—think about this—connect the dots: if Wisconsin’s best natural resource is healthy and prolific, we all benefit. Health care costs go down, social services costs drop, department of corrections’ budget is reduced, department of justice expenses are lower. Schools get much more bang for our buck because the time and money spent dealing with kids suffering from depression, behavior problems and alcohol and drug abuse is reduced.

Our state budget could be reduced because Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin would not be so prevalent and need so much of our money for its nefarious work. Government is leaner because we don’t have to create so many government-run, taxpayer-funded help programs and initiatives, including such things as Family Planning Medicaid Waiver programs. Businesses would have better employees, which translates into more profit—and on and on and on.

Now, I should add here that notwithstanding the liberal cultural and political rhetoric that we’re subjected to today, marriage is primarily about the next generation—how we perpetuate our species and our society and how we care for our young. So, yes, marriage is fundamentally about procreation, which leads me to say that you should not believe the leftist lie that we nationally or globally have an overpopulation problem. We do not.

Next month a new documentary is scheduled for release entitled “Demographic Winter.” The subject is the decline of the natural family worldwide. One of the key issues associated with the decline of the natural family is a deteriorating birth rate. Most European countries are below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman. The United States is flirting with going below it. Abortion and the likes of Planned Parenthood and its insidious tax-payer funded work are at least partly to blame. When we don’t at least replace ourselves, think about the trickle-down effect just economically.

Where do you get the workers necessary to produce the goods that help run the economic engine? Europe, by the way, is beginning to experience a workforce shortage. Where do you find the people to pay the taxes? Or do you just keep taxing fewer and fewer people more and more? This is a very real problem...other societies have vanished for what boiled down to a lack of procreation.

Remember in the midst of this that just producing children is not all there is to a flourishing and sustainable society. Those children need to be well cared for and given the very best opportunity to survive and flourish if they are going to be the leaders and the productive, creative, innovative citizens we need in the future—and that happens when the children are born into and grow up in homes with their married mom and dad.

On April 15, tax day, which is a week from this coming Tuesday, a new report is going to be released that will show in real dollars and cents the cost to you and me as taxpaying citizens of fractured families and out-of-wedlock births right here in Wisconsin. While we do not have all the statistics available for the public right now, I am confident that the numbers are staggering. For years I have made educated guesses that the cost is in the hundreds of millions of dollars every year that we spend trying to help, respond to, take care of, or in some way deal with the fallout from fractured families. I stand by that estimate and soon we'll know the degree of my accuracy.

So, for you fiscal conservatives who want to know “the bottom line,” we'll have it soon. But what you've heard tonight should be more than enough to make you realize that the economic future of Wisconsin is closely tied to the future of her families. As the family, my friends, so the state.

On many levels, Wisconsin cannot afford to continue to keep her best natural resource on the endangered species list. We must change from a divorce culture to a marriage culture. We must find ways, culturally and legislatively, to reinstate marriage to its unique and special place in our society. We must promote it and its value among our young people. We must find a way to reform our no-fault, unilateral, no-contest divorce laws. We must find a way to ensure more babies are born into homes with married moms and dads. We must be ever vigilant that marriage is not redefined, reshaped, functionally renamed or redesigned in number or gender. In short, we must consider the health of the natural family at every juncture.

In 1987, Ronald Reagan signed an executive order demanding that all policies that came from any place in his administration must be subjected to a rigorous vetting regarding the impact such a policy or program would have on the American family. The policies and programs had to at least pass the test of

“do no harm.” Friends, Ronald Reagan got it—he understood the health of the United States of America is directly related to the health of her families. The question tonight is, do we?

Do we understand the problem? More importantly, do we truly value the natural family enough to keep it off the endangered species list?

In closing, consider these statements from experts on these matters. Dr. Gary S. Becker, the 1992 recipient of the 1992 Nobel prize in Economics, has said, “The family is crucial to a well functioning economy. . . particularly in the modern economy based on innovation, new ideas and development.” And Dr. Maria Sophia Aguirre, a member of the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, has noted that “[r]esources are used inefficiently when directed toward policies that weaken families instead of policies that strengthen them. This, in turn, hampers the sustainability of real economic growth and perpetuates poverty.”

If we really care about improving Wisconsin’s economy, education and health care, then we had best begin securing the health of the natural resource that makes it all work: natural marriage and the family. We must keep it off the endangered species list. Should we neglect this responsibility, we ensure continued economic and social struggles of increasing magnitudes. If we take on this vital responsibility, we ensure that Wisconsin will truly be a great state for generations to come. For, as the family, so the state.

---

<sup>1</sup>Wisconsin taxpayers spend \$737 million annually as a result of family fragmentation. Nationally the amount is \$112 billion annually. Source: *The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing*, Institute for American Values, et al. A report released April 15, 2008.



A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Julaine Appling moved to Wisconsin following college graduation and has lived there most of the intervening years. Her educational background includes a B.A. in Humanities, a B.S. in English Education, a Master of Science in Educational Administration and Supervision, with additional graduate-level course work at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee.

An educator at heart, Julaine has been a classroom teacher and an administrator in private schools.

In 1997 Julaine began serving at Wisconsin Family Council, Inc., (formerly The Family Research Institute of Wisconsin). When the board reorganized WFC in 1998, Julaine became the Executive Director and in 2006 was named Chief Executive Officer. Over the last several years, Julaine has become a statewide leader in the effort to preserve traditional marriage, family, life and liberty in Wisconsin.

Julaine is regularly sought by media outlets, as well as by civic organizations, churches, and other groups statewide, to speak on various issues impacting Wisconsin's families.

A strong believer in community involvement, Julaine was elected to the Watertown Unified School Board for two terms and has also served on the Watertown Public Library Board of Trustees, where she was president 2002-2005. She currently serves on the Jefferson County Library Council and the Wisconsin Abstinence Coalition.



Wisconsin Family Council (WFC) was founded in 1986 to forward Judeo-Christian principles and values in Wisconsin by strengthening and preserving marriage, family, life and liberty. Among other activities, WFC informs the general public, churches and policymakers of our state about important pro-family issues and equips and inspires them to become involved in making Wisconsin a better place for our state's best natural resource: her traditional families. WFC believes significant, long-lasting change does not come from the top down, but from the bottom up as individual families, churches and communities are strengthened and equipped to appropriately impact Wisconsin's culture and government.

PO Box 2075 • Madison WI 53701 • 888-378-7395  
info@wifamilycouncil.org • www.wifamilycouncil.org

*This publication was designed and printed compliments of PIP Printing, Milwaukee, WI, 414-535-1805*