

Decriminalizing polygamy is no laughing matter



Jonathan Turley (From Turley blog)

Some people laugh when they hear New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan and others suggest that the decriminalization of polygamy might be the next big fight in the ongoing battle to defend marriage.

Here's a story to wipe the smiles off their faces.

Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, says he is going to Salt Lake City today to file a challenge to the Utah statute criminalizing bigamy and cohabitation. He's filing the lawsuit on behalf of the Brown family. The Browns are nationally known as an openly polygamous family showcased on the TLC program *Sister Wives*.

Writing on his blog, the professor said he is "proud" to represent the family:

We believe that this case represents the strongest factual and legal basis for a challenge to the criminalization of polygamy ever filed in the federal courts. We are not demanding the recognition of polygamous marriage. We are only challenging the right of the state to prosecute people for their private relations and demanding equal treatment with other citizens in living their lives according to their own beliefs. This action seeks to protect one of the defining principles of this country, what Justice Louis Brandeis called 'the right to be left alone.' In that sense, it is a challenge designed to benefit not just polygamists but all citizens who wish to live their lives according to their own values – even if those values run counter to those of the majority in the state.

Talk about a slippery slope. Check out more on the professor's blog.