



PO Box 1327 • Madison WI 53701-1327
608-268-5074 (Madison) • 866-849-2536 (toll-free) • 608-256-3370 (fax)
Email: info@wisconsinfamilyaction.org
Web site: www.wisconsinfamilyaction.org

LEGISLATIVE MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature
From: Julaine K. Appling, President
Date: December 5, 2007
Re: Assembly Joint Resolution 5

Now that the Assembly State Affairs committee has voted 8-1 in favor of **Assembly Joint Resolution 5 (AJR 5)**, Wisconsin Family Action urges leadership in both the State Assembly and State Senate to expedite a floor vote on AJR 5 and strongly encourages all legislators to cast their vote in support of AJR5.

The resolution introduced by Representative Marlin Schneider appropriately renames the decorated tree displayed in the state Capitol during the month of December the “Wisconsin State Christmas Tree.” Wisconsin Family Action commends Representative Schneider’s stand on this issue and fully supports AJR5.

The Christmas tree is a traditional, decorative symbol of the Christmas holiday. The tree placed in the rotunda of the Capitol each December, however, has been referred to as a “holiday tree” for the past twenty-one years. Allegedly, the reason behind the use of this generic, politically correct name is to avoid offending anyone with the word “Christmas.” Since *95% of Americans celebrate Christmas each year* (Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, 2005), and *69% of Americans prefer “Merry Christmas” over “Happy Holidays”* (USAToday/CNN/Gallup Poll, December 20, 2005), it is not only likely but highly probable that the title, “holiday tree,” offends a sizeable majority of Wisconsinites, compared to the few who would oppose the title “Christmas tree.”

By displaying a “Christmas tree” in the Capitol rotunda the state is not promoting a particular religion but simply celebrating a national holiday, recognized throughout the United States and the world. The name, “Wisconsin State Christmas Tree,” is consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court’s position that government can sponsor displays of our religious heritage (*Lynch*, 465 U.S. at 677). The celebration of Christmas, which has included the traditional Christmas tree for several hundred years now, is definitely a part of our heritage.

An overwhelming majority of Wisconsin’s citizens will be celebrating Christmas this December, and many of them will be visiting our beautiful state Capitol. They are not celebrating “holiday”; they are celebrating “Christmas.” AJR5 is reasonable, legal and is consistent with the values and traditions of the citizens of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Family Action urges you to support AJR5 and the traditional celebration of Christmas in the state of Wisconsin.

JKA

Wisconsin Family Action is the legislative arm of Wisconsin Family Council.