

# Polygamy in the united states



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INSTITUTE: USA: A CASE AGAINST LEGALIZATION OF POLYGAMY Polygamy was first banned by the English law, followed by the law of USA in 1800's. This was achieved after a great public uproar against the Mormons; a religious/cultural group that practices polygamy and is present predominantly in mountain ranges of Canada, Mexico and also within American boundaries (Legal dictionary, 2011). Polygamy and bigamy is according to present day American law criminalized. The purpose this paper is to present a case against legalizing polygamy/bigamy in the United States. According to a story titled: ' One woman's crusade', published in ABC News (2004), strict lawful actions are not currently taken by the USA government against the polygamous community firstly because polygamy is practiced as part of religion among them and secondly because they claim that the marriages other than the first one are not performed against the presence of church or law; these are marriages in what they call a ' spiritual sense'. However, there is stance against this practice also because some of the polygamous groups marry girls who are not of age and the ' wives' are treated as property, incest is not usually considered (ABC news, 2004). The thesis statement is that polygamy should not be legalized, because it has multiple social, psychological, medical and economic negative implications. Polygamy refers to the practice of being married to more than one living spouse. It is a common practice in some religions and cultures. The Mormons are the prominent cultural group which is known to practice polygamy (Legal Dictionary, 2011). The first argument against legalization of polygamy is the US is a logical one, based on common sense. Since USA stands for gender equality in all matters, therefore, if polygamy is legalized, it would mean that it is legalized for both, men and women. In such a case, determining the

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father of the child would pose a complication and the whole family system will be thrown upside down (Llewellyn, 2006). Social impacts of polygamy are also negative. Social problems and practices are interlinked. Legalization of polygamy will also encourage same sex marriages, bestiality and incest (Khalsa, 2005). Polygamy is nothing less than an umbrella, a shelter of protection for sexual predators (Llewellyn, 2006). Polygamy is also one of the leading causes of sexually transmitted diseases In Ghana, a research study has revealed that polygamy largely contributes to STD (Lithur, 2009; cited in GNA, 2009). Lithur (2009, cited in GNA, 2009) further observed while speaking to reproductive health students in a seminar, that the major cause of AIDS is also polygamy. Polygamy also has negative psychological impacts. Quality of family life is also denied to children living and growing up in the polygamous cultures (Llewellyn, 2006). A normal and respectful quality life is also denied to the wives. Here is a testimony from a 16 year old girl, Rachael (cited in Llewellyn, 2006), who married one young male in the polygamous group but was advised by the step father not to conceive; however, she had truly bonded with her husband so when she did conceive, she was subjected to a horrendous punishment of being married to the stepfather by force and engage in sexual acts with the 65 years old predator. ' Damnation could not be worse than being subjected to a polygamous marriage' (Racheal, cited in Llewellyn, 2006). Here is a testimony of this from another person who has directly been a victim of polygamy (Jessop, Cited in Sachs, of TIME; 2007). Jessop, a victim of polygamous marriage who managed to escape testifies: ' I was married when I was 18, I did not want to marry, my heart was set at going to college...and I did not really know what rape meant then.... money was not around for the children...mostly they survived on food stamps.. life

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was difficult.’ (Jessop, cited in Sachs, TIME; 2007). In light of above arguments it can be concluded that polygamy has numerous negative implications for the society and its members. It is against basic human rights and must be banned and panelized strongly. Victims of the polygamous groups have themselves testified the mental torture, abuse, compromised family life and degraded, unethical, immoral social values of the polygamous culture. It should not at any cost be legalized in the USA, or any other country for that matter. REFERENCES: ABC News. ‘ One Woman’s crusade’. Polygamy: Legal Issues (March 4th, 2004) GNA. ‘ Polygamy is major cause of STDs in Ghana.’ Peace FM online. < <http://news. peacefmonline.com/health/200912/33523. php>>. Khalsa, Ruth. ‘ Polygamy as a red herring in same sex marriage debate.’ Duke Law Journal: JSTOR, 54. 6 (Apr, 2005), pp. 1665-1693. Electronic. Legal Dictionary. ‘ Polygamy: legal Definition’. Farlex (2011). . Llewellyn, John. ‘ Polygamy’s rape of Rachael Strong: Protected environment for predators’. Arizona: Agreka, LLC, 2006. Sachs, Andrea. ‘ Polygamy survivor Carolyn Jessop’. TIME. (Oct, 24th 2007). .