

Florida signs for marriage

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Ocala, Fla. (ABP)-Seeking to galvanize 1,550 messengers to action, leaders of the Florida Baptist State Convention publicly signed the Florida Marriage Protection Amendment during its annual meeting Nov. 14-15 in Ocala.

Among signers was Hayes Wicker, president of the Florida convention, who was elected unanimously without opposition to a second one-year term during this meeting.

Others to sign the petition that defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman included John Sullivan, state executive director-treasurer; Michael Landry of Sarasota, state convention first vice president; and Ben Bryant of Starke, president of the State Board of Missions, the Florida Baptist Convention's governing body.

The symbolic signing "helped to underscore the importance of the petition," said Bryant. A total of 611,009 petition signatures are needed by Feb. 1, 2006, to place the measure on the November 2006 Florida ballot. Prior to the convention meeting, only 108,669 signed petitions had been certified by the Florida Division of Elections.

Florida Baptists have been engaged in the petition drive since the 2004 convention meeting, when messengers unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the amendment. A coalition of Christian organizations embraced the cause, writing the amendment's language and campaigning for its

passage.

Bryant challenged messengers to become “Defenders of Marriage” by recruiting 10 people to sign petitions and make a commitment to enlist another 10.

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