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Bauer deluged with calls after ad on marriage bill

■ Pelath says he won't hold hearing.

By JAMES WENSITS
Tribune Political Writer

State Rep. B. Patrick Bauer's Indianapolis office has been deluged with calls, but a resolution seeking a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman still isn't getting a hearing.

Bauer, who is Speaker of the House, was targeted earlier this week by Family Research Council, a Washington, D.C.-based group, that tried to pressure him into using his position to force a hearing on the resolution by taking out a full-page advertisement in *The Tribune*.

The advertisement, which ran Monday, criticized Bauer and urged those in favor of the resolution to call Bauer's office. Several dozen did, but nothing has changed.

"I'm not going to do it," Rep. Scott Pelath, D-Michigan City, said Tuesday in response to the group's push for a hearing.

Pelath, as chairman of the House



Bauer

Rules Committee, has the power to order a hearing on the bill and was the indirect target of the Family Research Council's attack on Bauer.

Today is the deadline for holding committee hearings, and

Pelath remains adamant in his decision not to hear the measure.

"It's already against the law in Indiana," Pelath said, referring to the same-sex marriages the resolution seeks to prevent.

Pelath said he believes the same-sex marriage issue is being used as a fund-raising tool by groups looking for issues.

"People are being told same-sex marriages are legal in Indiana," Pelath said.

Both Pelath and Bauer said the advertisement was misleading.

The ad was headlined: "Will we let unelected judges in Massachusetts re-define marriage in Indiana?" and

said Bauer and Pelath "conspired" to block discussion on the resolution.

"Massachusetts judges don't decide what happens in this state," Pelath said.

They can, however, have an effect on the telephone system in the speaker's office.

Dolly Starnes, a leadership assistant to Bauer, said some of the calls were "real nasty," while some were "real nice."

One caller "accused us of spreading AIDS," Starnes said, expressing amazement.

Other callers wanted to thank Bauer for his stand, Starnes said. "A lot of them don't realize that a law is on the books or that Massachusetts judges can't tell us what to do."

Bauer believes the advertisement was deliberately misleading.

A representative of the Family Research Council told *The Tribune* Monday that the group is aware of the Indiana law but is concerned that it could be overturned in the future.

Staff writer James Wensits:
jwensits@sbtinfo.com
(574) 235-6353