



Gay couples ask Conn. court for marriage

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HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Connecticut's civil unions for same-sex couples are inferior to marriage and violate their rights to equal protection and due process, an attorney for eight gay couples told the state Supreme Court Monday.

The couples want the court to rule that the state's marriage law is unconstitutional because it applies only to heterosexual couples, effectively denying gay couples the financial, social and emotional benefits of marriage.

"What is denied to these families is something that goes to the heart of equal protection, which is the right to be part of the fabric of society when they are just the same as other couples and other families," said their attorney, Bennett Klein.

Connecticut was the first state to allow civil unions without court pressure, but the lawsuit raises questions of whether the 2005 law helped or hurt same-sex couples in their quest for equality.

As several states consider civil union laws, the Connecticut case could have nationwide implications. Both sides said Monday they are aware of its significance.

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"Our 9-year-old said it best: 'How is the world supposed to get better if nothing changes?'" said plaintiff Geraldine Artis of Clinton.

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Assistant Attorney General Jane Rosenberg, representing the state, argued that civil unions give gay couples the same rights by state law as married couples.

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"(The question) is really, is the Legislature constitutionally required to use the word marriage when it's referring to the package of rights and benefits it has given to same-sex couples. And the answer is clearly no," Rosenberg said.

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Arguments wrapped up after about three hours Monday, and the justices are expected to rule later this year.

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Only Massachusetts allows same-sex couples to marry. Connecticut, Vermont, California, New Jersey, Maine and Washington have laws allowing either civil unions or domestic partnerships, with New Hampshire and Oregon set to join in January. Hawaii extends certain spousal rights to same-sex couples and consulting heterosexual pairs.

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A theme at Monday's hearing was whether gays and lesbians should be considered a protected group. That is the legal term for a segment of the population that, among other things, is particularly vulnerable to discrimination and lacks political power.

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The Connecticut couples who sued have been together between 19 and 32 years and say civil unions are inferior to marriage and violate their rights to equal protection and due process.

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Married couples have federal rights related to taxes, Social Security beneficiary rules, veterans' benefits and other laws that people in civil unions don't have. Because civil unions aren't recognized nationwide, other rights such as the ability to make medical decisions for an incapacitated partner, disappear when couples cross state lines.

The couples' claim was dismissed last year by a judge who said they received the equality they sought when Connecticut passed its civil unions law. The couples appealed.

The lawsuit names state Department of Public Health and the Madison town clerk's office, which denied marriage licenses to the couples based on state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal's advice.

A bill is pending in Connecticut's legislature to approve same-sex marriage, but leaders of the Judiciary Committee say they want to pull it from consideration this session because they do not believe enough lawmakers would vote to approve it. Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who signed the civil unions bill into law, has said she would veto a gay marriage bill.

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bookworm wrote: 5h 1m ago

Oh, and for you numnuts that say "everyone" knows a civil union for gays is Wrong, or the "creator" says it's wrong.. well, you are just poor schmucks who have been scammed by a multi thousand year scam system.

A bible written by men, NOT the creator, is what guides you. Edited to manipulate the sheep, so the wealthy and rich could continue to do as they wished. Hardly something to base a life on.

Based on Sheep herding ancient people, you state that THIS is what reality is.

Well, fine for you, but for pragmatic realists, we just think you are nuts. A grown up version of believing in Santa Claus.. if an adult believed in him, we would take away their rights, but not where God is concerned.

And to apply your nuttiness to others, that have NOTHING to do with you, well, you are out of line. You can go have your religion, do what you want, but KEEP IT TO YOURSELF!

Jesus didn't want to be worshipped, he wanted to be followed. When is the last time you have helped a Leper? Or a poor person? Do you rail against Abortion, but do nothing to save the starving people in Africa? Well, then you are failing Jesus.

Jesus didn't care if Gays married, only some dusty old man who wrote something in the EDITED version of the bible that you act like it is true says that. What about all the parts of the Bible that DIDN'T make the cut?

Why is something a sheep herder wrote in an ignorant and simple time apply to us today? Because you SAY SO? you have got to be pulling my leg.

I am fine with you being a religious nut, and recognize you have lots of company. That is what freedom of Religion is.

I sure don't see what that has to do with whether gays have a union. Butt out. NOT your business.

Worry about saving your OWN soul.

Start by volunteering with the poor.

Spouting off against Gays and bringing the Creators name into it won't get you into heaven. It just shows the darkness in your heart. Called Satan.



bookworm wrote: 5h 13m ago

Marriage should have NEVER been the concern of the STATE!

Only Civil Unions should EVER have been offered for ANY couple. Someone more legally than me can get into the conflict, but really, step back and get some perspective.

The Legal arrangement that allows for two people to join is the business of the state, but "blessing" the arrangement or giving it any type of spiritual context is WAY out of line, and it is only because we have folks saying we live in a "Christian" nation that this issue has any legs. The error was made long ago, time for us to fix it.

Instead of Gays getting to get "married", Straights should STOP getting Married.

Marriage, in the religious and/or spiritual sense, is under the purview of whatever religion you choose to be involved with. Could be Wicca, Christianity, Judaism, whatever you want.

If the state wants to let your arrangement serve double duty to also be official in the eyes of the state, that is fine. But that arrangement is and MUST BE called Civil Union or other non denominational term.

The State has NO business in Marriage. For ANYONE.

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dancu wrote: 5h 41m ago

tinawina,

If you look at the way that the constitution is worded and what was implied you will find that the government did not mean to leave out religion from the laws, only to state that the U.S. will have no national religion like England had at that point in time.

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tinawina wrote: 6h 18m ago

Seperation of church and state, people. We all learned it in elementary school.

In any case, in Conneticut this is an argument of semantics. If you ask me, the government should get out of the "marriage" business all together. Just issue certificates for people building a hohsehold together that offers the same rights currently granted when people wed, then let those same people go to a church to get a "marriage" certificate if that's what they want. The whole debate about what to call these unions is based on religion anyway... let them duke it out on that level.

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GEW wrote: 6h 41m ago



Homosexuality is an abomination against the Creator, and there is nothing "gay" it. Simply creating a man-made law that erroneously calls a sinful union between two men or two women marriage will not change God's definition of the sacred institution that He created.

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Kaiser wrote: 6h 57m ago

Gay marriage and civil unions for homosexuals is just plain wrong, and everybody knows it.

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