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Connecticut State Sen. Andrew McDonald, D-Stamford

Connecticut Becomes Third State to Legalize Gay Marriage

October 11, 2008 11:00 AM
by Rachel Balik

The Connecticut Supreme Court rules that same-sex couples have the right to marry in the state.

Connecticut Supreme Court Legalizes Gay Marriage

Although a lower court had ruled that civil unions would suffice in Connecticut, the state Supreme Court overturned the decision in an 85-page, 4-3 majority ruling. The Hartford Courant reports that in the decision, Justice Richard Palmer wrote, “we reject the trial court’s decision that marriage and civil unions are ‘separate’ but ‘equal’ entities.”

The minority justices argued that same-sex couples could not be considered a “suspect class,” The New York Times reported. They stated that because there are many prominent gay politicians, homosexual people are not “politically powerless,” and therefore don’t deserve special treatment as a group suffering discrimination.

Palmer also wrote that, “To decide otherwise would require us to apply one set of constitutional principles to gay persons and another to all others.” Newsday collected quotes from people inclined to concur with Palmer and from those who adamantly oppose the decision. Dissenting Justice Peter Zarella argued that, “The ancient definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman has its basis in biology, not bigotry.” Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell said that while she disagreed with the decision, and felt that many residents did as well, she thought

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that undoing the decision, theoretically via voter referendum, would be quite difficult.

Background: Civil unions in Connecticut

Three years ago almost to the date, Connecticut became the third state to legalize [civil unions for same-sex couples](#). Although the legalization of civil unions in other states was cause for significant celebration, in Connecticut, the attitude was felicitous but subdued, reported The Washington Post. Activists had hoped that full marriage rights would be granted. Connecticut was the first state to have the legislature legalize unions without an order from a higher court.

Sources in this Story

- [Hartford Courant: Gay Marriage Rights Approved in CT](#)
- [The New York Times: Connecticut Ruling Overturns Ban on Same-Sex Marriage](#)
- [Newsday: Reactions on Conn.'s same-sex marriage ruling](#)
- [The Washington Post: Connecticut's First Same-Sex Unions Proceed Civilly](#)
- [findingDulcinea: Courts in L.A. Will Perform Gay Marriages on June 16](#)
- [The Boston Globe: SJC: Gay marriage legal in Mass.](#)

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California recently became the second state to legalize gay marriage. On June 16, courts in California began [performing marriages between same-sex couples](#) after the Supreme Court overturned the ban on gay marriage previously upheld in the state. In California, courthouses added extra staff in anticipation of the rush.

In 2003, The Boston Globe reported that, in a 4-3 ruling, the Supreme Court in Massachusetts had ordered the [legalization of same-sex marriage](#). The majority ruling stated that Massachusetts “forbids the creation of second-class citizens.”

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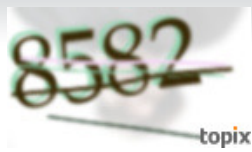
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