



## Battle for Marriage Shaping Up in New York

The battle for marriage is heating up once more in New York, and with Governor Andrew Cuomo leading the drive to legalize same-sex marriage the issue has taken center stage in the state legislature. With the likely approval of a homosexual marriage bill by the state assembly, Cuomo has focused his attention on turning some key votes in the state Senate, which the Republican Party controls by a razor-thin 32-30 margin. He is getting some help in his campaign from former Republican and now liberal Independent New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has been pressuring some vulnerable GOP state Senators to support the measure.



[Baptist Press News](#) noted that in the nationwide battle over marriage, “New York is one of the top prizes. It trails only California and Texas in population, and its influence on other states, particularly those in the Northeast, is huge.” Furthermore, with a population of some 19 million residents, New York’s numbers are more than the combined populations of all five states that have legalized same-sex marriage thus far. Pro-family leader Jason McGuire, president of the [New York’s Family Research Foundation](#), warned that should his state fall to homosexual marriage, it would mean that “it will be much easier for other states to fall in the future.”

When liberal New York lawmakers last tried to legalize same-sex marriage in 2009, the sticking point was the senate, where the measure was defeated by a 38 to 24 vote, with all the Republican Senators joined by eight Democrats in voting it down. One of the key legislators leading the opposition to homosexual marriage is [Democrat State Senator Reuben Diaz](#), a Pentecostal pastor in the Bronx who sponsored a May 15 rally in his borough that was attended by several thousand supporters of traditional marriage.

Speaking at that rally was Brian Brown, president of the [National Organization for Marriage](#), which is reportedly contributing more than \$1 million to the latest effort to defeat homosexual marriage in New York. Much of that money is earmarked for the campaigns of Democratic legislators who are taking a stand for traditional marriage, as well as to defeat Republicans who cave in on the issue and side with Cuomo’s crusade to pass a “gay marriage” bill. Brown told the crowd at the rally not to “accept the lie that redefining marriage will not affect you. It will.”

Brown’s group has warned that should same-sex marriage be legalized, schools would have the freedom to teach children that homosexuality is a normal lifestyle. For example, in a 30-second television spot the National Organization for Marriage produced to fight measures in states such as California and Maine, viewers are shown scenes reminiscent of actual incidents, including one in which a second-grade class in Massachusetts was read a book entitled *King and King*, about two princes who “marry,” and another in which a first-grade class in San Francisco was taken on a field trip to witness the



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“marriage” of two lesbians. The ad warns that if homosexual marriage is legalized, it’s “not just kids who will face consequences,” but the “rights of people who believe marriage means a man and a woman will no longer matter. We’ll all have to accept gay marriage whether we like it or not.”

McGuire emphasized that the issue is not about denying people their rights. “A same-sex couple has the right to live as they want in the privacy of their own home,” he told Baptist Press News. “What they don’t have the right to do is to redefine marriage for the rest of society.”

While pro-family forces in New York state have thus far been successful at turning back the push to legalize same-sex marriage, this time around Governor Cuomo has recruited some heavyweight GOP donors to help him pressure enough Republican state Senators to change their votes and support the “gay marriage” bill. In addition to Mayor Bloomberg, who has personally given \$100,000 to the cause and lobbied lawmakers on the issue, according to the *New York Times*, much of the funding for the “gay marriage” campaign in the state is coming from “a group of conservative financiers and wealthy donors to the Republican Party, most of whom are known for bankrolling right-leaning candidates and causes.”

The *Times* reported that the “conservative” donors “represent some of New York’s wealthiest and most politically active figures and include Paul E. Singer, a hedge fund manager and top-tier Republican donor,” as well as wealthy businessman Clifford S. Asness, whom the paper described as a “libertarian who favored less government intrusion in both markets and personal affairs,” as well as a frequent GOP donor who has “praised Tea Party activists on his blog.” While calling himself a “pretty straight-down-the-line small-government guy,” Asness nonetheless argued that homosexual marriage is “an issue of basic freedom.”

The donations from Bloomberg, Asness, Singer, and others have been funneled through a homosexual activist group called New Yorkers United for Marriage, and are helping to pressure “several members of the Senate Republican majority to join most Senate Democrats in backing same-sex marriage,” reported the *Times*.

Meanwhile, pro-family leaders have taken Governor Cuomo’s crusade as motivation to work harder to protect traditional marriage. “Our pastors are fired up by the governor’s assault on marriage,” McGuire told the *Times*. “We’re already in gear.” Among the actions of the pro-marriage forces have been their own high-pressure calls to both Democrat and Republican state Senators whose votes could well decide whether or not the Governor’s pet bill passes.

This year pro-family activists have added a significant ally to their cause, New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who in 2009 provided only lip service to the campaign to protect traditional marriage. In a *60 Minutes* interview on CBS last March, Dolan urged legislators not to change the meaning of “authentic marriage” by legalizing same-sex marriage.

Proponents of same-sex marriage have pointed to a recent survey, conducted by the Roman Catholic Siena College in Loudonville, New York, showing that 58 percent of New York’s registered voters would support a change in the definition of marriage, compared to 36 percent who believe marriage should be only between a man and a woman. But a survey from another Catholic school, Marist College in Poughkeepsie, has shown that 53 percent of New Yorkers believe that marriage should be only between a man and a woman, with only 46 percent disagreeing. Moreover, the poll found that 76 percent of self-identified Republicans believe that marriage should take place only between a man and a woman, with a much smaller 58 percent majority of Democrats saying that same-sex couples should legally be able to marry.



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Pro-family leaders such as the NY Family Research Foundation's Jason McGuire are warning that even with a Republican majority in the Senate and a majority of New Yorkers in favor of defending traditional marriage, the fight over marriage in the Empire State is shaping up to be an intense one. Governor Cuomo appears to be particularly obsessed with passing a same-sex marriage bill, declaring recently that the issue is about "more than just a piece of legislation. This is about the lives of people who[m] I have known for many years, who currently are without the rights to which they are entitled."

McGuire said that his state is particularly vulnerable to the assault by Cuomo's forces, noting that New York "has neither a state Defense of Marriage Act, nor a constitutional amendment protecting authentic marriage. Since marriage is not specifically defined as between a man and a woman in the State Constitution ... there is no clear protection in New York State laws."

He said that pro-family leaders "recognize that they are entering the most intense stage of their ongoing battle to preserve the historic definition of marriage." With his state key to how the nation as a whole comes down on the definition of marriage, McGuire emphasized that it is important for his fellow New Yorkers, particularly those in the faith community, to encourage their state Senators to take a strong stand for true marriage. "Marriage will soon be either legally redefined or upheld," said McGuire. "The question is whether the Christian community will look back and say, 'I wish we would have done more to stand for marriage' or 'Thank God, we stood for marriage.' "



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