



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 14, 2013

Hawaii Legalizes Same-sex Marriage

On November 13, Hawaii Governor Neil Abercrombie signed the bill making his state the 16th (including the District of Columbia) to make same-sex partnerships legally equal to traditional marriage. Set to take effect December 2, the bill gained final passage on November 12 with a 19-4 vote in the state Senate, fifteen days after Abercrombie had called a special session to force the measure through the legislature.



“The legalization of marriage for same-sex couples is part of the long history of civil rights movements in the United States,” Abercrombie announced in a statement. He added that passage of the measure represented “a clear example of people exercising courage, determination, and patient perseverance. The result advances equity in marriage and honors all First Amendment religious imperatives.”

President Obama applauded passage of the bill, using the opportunity to re-enforce his claim of Hawaiian birth. “By giving loving gay and lesbian couples the right to marry if they choose, Hawaii exemplifies the values we hold dear as a nation,” said Obama in a prepared statement. “I’ve always been proud to have been born in Hawaii, and today’s vote makes me even prouder.”

Republican State Representative Bob McDermott, who led the fight against the bill, earlier filed a lawsuit in an attempt to derail the special session, and vowed to continue to fight the law in court.

Just days before passage of the bill, over ten thousand Hawaiians gathered on the grounds of the state Capitol to take a stand for traditional marriage and to oppose the bill. Jim Hochberg of Hawaii Family Advocates told reporters that nearly twelve thousand state residents “took time out of their busy schedules to show the legislature that they understand that marriage should remain between one man and one woman.”

Hochberg said that the new law will not merely legalize homosexual marriage, but will endanger the religious rights of Hawaiians who oppose same-sex partnerships. He warned that Christian business owners who serve the wedding industry — including photographers, cake bakers, florists, and caterers — will not have the option to turn down homosexual couples.

He added that “churches are only protected from being forced to participate in solemnization or celebration of [same-sex] marriages, but not other things related to marriage, like marriage counseling.” Hochberg warned that if a church or Christian organization allows an outside group to use its facility for a wedding event, it will be compelled to allow anyone to use the facility — including those who don’t hold to its tenets and beliefs.

[Focus on the Family](#) noted that during legislative testimony for the bill, “an unprecedented 5,000 people signed up to testify. Eighty-seven percent were in opposition to redefining the institution, according to the House Minority Office, responsible for registering those who testify.

While most lawmakers ignored the pleas of those testifying against the bill, one surprising exception was state Representative Jo Jordan, an openly lesbian lawmaker who voted against the bill because of its lack of protection for religious freedoms. “She actually gets the fact that individuals who are in



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businesses related to wedding functions should not be forced to participate in same-sex marriages,” Hochberg told Focus on the Family. “She’s a hero to me. She actually voted what she thought was right rather than what her constituency wanted.”

Photo of same-sex marriage supporters outside the Hawaii State Capitol in Honolulu: AP Images



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