



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 2, 2011

Hawaii Legalizes Same-Sex Unions; Maryland Moving in Same Direction

On February 23 Hawaii became the 12th state to recognize homosexual unions, as Democratic Governor Neil Abercrombie signed a bill granting same-sex couples the same state legal benefits extended to married couples, but without calling such unions “marriage.” The law will go into effect on January 1, 2012.



Meanwhile, on February 24 the Maryland Senate voted 25-21 to legalize same-sex marriage. At this writing, the state’s House of Delegates was expected to approve the measure as well, and Democratic Governor Martin O’Malley had promised to sign the bill.

[Baptist Press](#) reported that the defeat for traditional values in Hawaii came just a year after concerned Hawaiians had successfully pushed back attempts to legalize homosexual partnerships for two years in a row, with the help of a conservative-minded governor.

“In 2009, around 10,000 Christians rallied at the capitol and put enough pressure on the legislature that it ended the session without passing a civil unions bill,” reported BP News. “Last year’s rally of 15,000 — as well as follow-up contacts and visits — didn’t stop the legislature from passing the bill, but it did help pressure then-Gov. Linda Lingle, a Republican, to veto it.”

But with Lingle forced out of office via terms limits, Abercrombie, a former Democratic U.S. Representative, easily won the governorship — in part on his promise to help legalize homosexual unions. With the partnership of the state Assembly and the Senate, which both passed the measure by significant margins, Abercrombie attached his signature to the bill, declaring that it “represents equal rights for everyone in Hawaii, everyone who comes here.” He said the new law defined “the essence of the Aloha spirit. With its signing, I want to say ‘welcome’ to the world, come to paradise.”

Those defending traditional marriage warned that legalizing homosexual unions would not only destructively impact the moral climate of society, but would also affect such issues as the tax-exempt status of churches, religious liberties allowed in public places, and even what children are taught in school.

While the new law gives homosexual couples the same legal rights as married couples, it avoids the term “marriage,” referring to their partnerships as “civil unions.” Daniel Gluck of the Hawaii’s ACLU said that a push for full “marriage” designation on same-sex unions would be the next step for homosexual activists. “This is one step towards marriage equality,” he said, “but we will continue to fight until all of Hawaii’s families have the same rights, benefits, and responsibilities.”

Pro-family groups emphasized that Hawaiians need to know that full legalization of homosexual marriage would be the next attack on families. “Passage of this law is just a desperate and dishonest



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attempt to force same-sex 'marriage' on Hawaii because civil unions for same-sex couples were never the goal," said the Hawaii Family Forum in a news release. Added the Forum's Alan Cardenas, "They're really looking for same-sex marriage. We know it, They know it. The people of Hawaii have a right to know it."

In a statement the Hawaii Catholic Conference warned that "enactment of these marriage-like benefits in a civil union will intensify the legal attack on marriage. It will not appease those who wish to redefine the institution of marriage."

One pro-family leader in Hawaii, the Rev. Rick Lazor, told BP News that after several years of faithfully defending traditional marriage, many Hawaiians simply gave up the fight, giving homosexual activists the open door they needed. "One of the great strategies of a lot of activist groups — including homosexuals — is to wear the other side down," he said. "I think everybody is tired. I wish that weren't true, but we should have shown far better than we did in the fall election."

Lazor noted that the defeat in Hawaii is instructive for others battling for traditional marriage elsewhere. "It is not a one-time battle," Lazor told BP News. "The strength of our position needs to be top-notch, and we need to show up, and we certainly need to show up for elections. That's where we had the best chance — in the fall. Had we made good choices in November, this would be different today."

In the case of the push for homosexual marriage in Maryland, a recent survey indicated that 54 percent of the state's voters want marriage to be defined as only between a man and a woman, compared to 37 percent who support homosexual unions. According to the [Christian Post](#), "Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller (D-Calvert) and opponents of the bill ... vowed that if the bill becomes law then the issue will appear on the 2012 ballot as a referendum question for residents to vote on."

During marathon hearings in Maryland's House of Delegates, homosexual couples offered impassioned testimony in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage. "We've been together for 13 years," said Alvin Williams about himself and his homosexual partner, Nigel Simon. "We're a very solid family, very much into our religious beliefs that God creates people for love, and love is for everyone." Simon testified that he and Williams "represent the families who[m] this bill will impact. It's more than just a debate for us. It means a solidification of our family, that we're not legal strangers in the eyes of the law. And that's what we want to help people understand — that it's more than a debate for us. It's reality."

One powerful testimony in favor of traditional marriage came from former homosexual Anthony Falazarano of Parents and Friends Ministries, an organization that reaches out to those struggling with same-sex attraction. "I spent two years in recovery," Falazarano told Maryland's House of Delegates. "I am now married for over 25 years and have two grown children. I am proof that homosexuals are not born that way."

Falazarano explained that homosexuality is like an addiction, and legalizing same-sex partnerships would be a huge mistake. "Being set free from grip of the homosexual lifestyle was the equivalent of coming off of heroin," Falazarano testified. "But with God's help, I made it. After receiving help, I wanted to help others, and in the last 20 years I have ministered to over 600 men and women who have successfully left the homosexual lifestyle."

With a vote on the bill expected to come within days, Derek McCoy of the Association for Maryland Families said the outcome could dramatically impact Maryland's moral landscape. "This is about our culture, this is about generations, this is about our children," he said. "And I think it's fair enough to say



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that we need to keep marriage the way it's currently defined in this state and not allow one small group to say we want to redefine it for everybody else."



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