



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 17, 2012

## N.J. Governor Promises Veto on “Gay Marriage” Bill

The New Jersey state Assembly passed a same-sex marriage bill February 16 on a 42-33 vote, following the state Senate’s earlier 24-16 approval of the legislation, setting up what Gov. Chris Christie (left) has vowed will be a veto of the measure. While no Republicans joined with Democrats in the Assembly to pass the legislation, on the Senate side two GOP lawmakers did vote in favor of homosexual marriage, and two Democrats voted against it. According to the New Jersey Star-Ledger, political observers predict that homosexual activists will have a difficult time garnering the nearly dozen additional votes they need to override Christie’s veto. They have until January 2014, when the legislative session ends, to do so.



Same-sex marriage proponents have been planning their strategy for ramming through homosexual marriage, realizing that Christie is unlikely to budge on the issue. “Today, the legislature has brought us to the promised land,” said Steven Goldstein of Garden State Equality after passage of the bill. “We know the governor won’t let us enter, but we finally beheld the view of our dreams and we will never turn back.”

Democrat Reed Gusciora, the openly homosexual lawmaker who sponsored the bill in the Assembly, was optimistic that proponents could ultimately overcome the veto. “We do have two years,” he told the [Washington Post](#). “We changed a lot of views in the last couple of weeks. Give us two years and we’re going to change a heck of a lot more.”

This is the closest that same-sex marriage advocates in the state have gotten to success. A similar bill was defeated in the Senate in 2010 while Democratic Gov. Jon Corzine was in office. Their hopes dwindled with the election of Christie, who has consistently expressed his adamant opposition to homosexual marriage. On February 13, he reiterated to Fox News: “I am not a fan of same-sex marriage. It’s not something that I support.”

As the legislature sped through the process of passing the bill, a coalition of 39 clergy warned of the consequences of changing the structure of marriage — and families — in the state. “Altering the civil definition of ‘marriage’ does not change one law, but hundreds, even thousands, at once,” the group wrote in an open letter. “By a single stroke, every law where rights depend on marital status — such as employment discrimination, employment benefits, adoption, education, health care, elder care, housing, property and taxation — will change so that same-sex sexual relationships must be treated as if they were marriage.”

Opponents of the measure have insisted that New Jersey voters, not the legislature, should have the final say on how marriage is defined in the state. “Who should be the ultimate judge on deciding this



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issue?” asked Republican Assemblywoman Nancy Muñoz, an opponent of the bill. “Should it be the 121 of us in Trenton? Or should we let the people of New Jersey decide? I trust the people of New Jersey and believe that they should be allowed to voice their opinion for a vote.”

Christie agreed, calling passage of the bill little more than political theatrics. “I’ve given them an alternative,” he said of a potential state-wide marriage referendum. “Put it on the ballot and let the people decide.”

Republican State Senator Kip Bateman has drafted a resolution to put the marriage issue before state voters. But Senate President Steve Sweeney, a Democrat, has said he will not allow the measure to come before the full Senate for a vote, insuring a stalemate for the time being. Interestingly, a poll by the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest](#) (Rutgers University) shows that 53 percent of state residents think they should be allowed to vote on how marriage is defined — and 54 percent said they think homosexuals should be allowed to marry each other.



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