



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 3, 2013

## Rhode Island Falls to Same-sex “Marriage”

Rhode Island became the nation’s 10th state to [legalize same-sex “marriage”](#) as its House of Representatives gave approval May 2 to the “marriage equality” measure Governor Lincoln Chafee has been aggressively pushing since taking office in 2011. Chafee quickly followed up by signing the bill, declaring, “I am proud and humbled to make the Marriage Equality Act the law of the land in Rhode Island. We would not be where we are today without the Rhode Islanders who for decades have fought for tolerance and freedom over discrimination and division.” The law is scheduled to go into effect August 1.



Rhode Island is the last New England state to legalize gay “marriage,” following Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut. Same-sex “marriage” laws have also been passed in Washington, Iowa, New York, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, and measures are currently being pushed by homosexual groups in Delaware, Illinois, and Minnesota.

The latest blow to marriage comes as the Supreme Court is poised to rule on lawsuits that challenge the federal [Defense of Marriage Act](#) — which defines marriage as only between a man and a woman in federal business — and California’s [Proposition 8](#) marriage amendment, passed by state voters in 2008. Pro-family leaders warn that a High Court ruling against the measures would add momentum to the homosexual lobby’s aggressive campaign to force legalized same-sex “marriage” upon the entire nation. Frank Schubert of the [National Organization for Marriage](#) (NOM), which has been one of the lead pro-family groups defending traditional marriage, said that his group wasn’t surprised by the outcome, given the level of activism on the part of homosexual groups over the past several months. He noted that while Rhode Island “is a heavily Catholic state, which is what helped us hold same-sex marriage off for so long, it is also one of the most Democratic states.”

Nonetheless, Christopher Plante, director of [Rhode Island for Marriage](#), expressed his group’s disappointment in the outcome, given what is at stake. “Redefining marriage into a genderless institution to satisfy the demands of a small but politically powerful group is short-sighted policy that fails to take into account the rights and needs of the generations to come,” Plant said in a statement. “Children deserve to know and be cared for by a mom and dad. This law will intentionally deny children one or the other. The full impact may not be seen next week or next year, but our children will be the ones who pay the price for this decision.”

Homosexual activists have been trying for years to redefine marriage in Rhode Island, with marriage legislation being introduced in the state legislature every session for the past two decades. Two years ago the legislature killed a gay “marriage” measure, opting instead to pass a civil unions law. This year, with Gov. Chafee taking the lead, a redefinition bill had extra momentum, as the State House’s openly homosexual speaker, Gordon Fox, helped the Democrats to push through passage of the initial measure in January. On April 24, the Senate approved a modified version of the bill that would supposedly expand protections for religious individuals and groups, and the House followed up May 2 with its



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approval of the finalized measure.

Senate passage was facilitated in part by a cave-in from five Republican senators, who announced just before the vote that they would support the gay “marriage” bill. Republican Senate Minority Leader Dennis Algiere claimed their decision was somehow based on conservative values. “This is an issue of fairness, equality, and civil rights,” Algiere said in justifying his vote. “Those are our values, and we stand by them.”

Regardless of the provisions that are supposed to protect Christians and others from being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions, many religious organizations and businesses are concerned they will ultimately be targeted if they refuse to acknowledge gay couples. In New York, Maine, Vermont, and Washington, which have all legalized same-sex “marriage,” Christian business owners who have refused to accommodate same-sex couples in their desire to marry have faced stiff consequences.

A Christian couple in Vermont was sued for declining to host a homosexual wedding ceremony in their inn, and was forced to pay a fine and agree to cease accommodating all weddings at their facility. And in Washington State, a florist was recently sued by the state for declining, on religious grounds, to do business with two homosexual men who wanted her to provide the floral arrangements for their wedding ceremony. Similarly, notaries public in Maine and town clerks in New York State have been warned that they will be targeted if they refuse to solemnize same-sex “marriages” — even if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.

“When marriage is redefined into a genderless institution, it presents a range of legal conflicts for people of faith and the small businesses and charitable organizations they operate to serve the public,” Plante said. “Without robust legal protections to allow these faithful people and groups to maintain fidelity in the public square to their religious beliefs, we’re likely to see a raft of lawsuits and governmental action such as license revocations, fines, and denial of governmental contracts to these faith-based groups and individuals.”

One of the state’s most vocal opponents of the measure, Bishop Thomas J. Tobin of the Diocese of Providence, [issued a statement](#) after passage of the bill, saying that he was “profoundly disappointed that Rhode Island has approved legislation that seeks to legitimize ‘same-sex marriage,’” which he called an “immoral and unnecessary proposition.”

Tobin warned his Christian flock that “because ‘same-sex marriages’ are clearly contrary to God’s plan for the human family, and therefore objectively sinful, Catholics should examine their consciences very carefully before deciding whether or not to endorse same-sex relationships or attend same-sex ceremonies, realizing that to do so might harm their relationship with God and cause significant scandal to others.”



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