

Coalition May Appeal D.C. Marriage Ruling to Supreme Court

Traditional marriage supporters may challenge an appeals court ruling Thursday blocking a public vote on same-sex marriage in the nation's capital.

In its 5-4 decision, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals ruled that the city's Elections Board acted appropriately when it decided that a referendum on the definition of marriage would violate a human rights law barring initiatives that would authorize discrimination. The district legalized same-sex marriage in December, and the law went into effect in March.

Attorneys for the Stand4Marriage D.C. Coalition, which challenged the elections board decision, say they may appeal Thursday's decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"This case involves the fundamental right of individual Americans to vote," said Byron Babione, senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) and a member of its Marriage Litigation Center. "It is an extremely important issue and one which could be very attractive to the Supreme Court. We are weighing our options about whether to appeal, and we feel like our case would be very strong."

The appeals court ruling comes just a week after a U.S. District Court in Massachusetts ruled that portions of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) are unconstitutional. DOMA defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman and prevents states from having to recognize gay marriages performed elsewhere.

In his decision, Judge Joseph Tauro said DOMA infringed on

states' rights to define marriage and award federal and state benefits such as Medicaid. "Congress undertook this classification for the one purpose that lies entirely outside of legislative bounds, to disadvantage a group of which it disapproves," Tauro wrote in his decision. "And such a classification the Constitution clearly will not permit."

Traditional marriage supporters expect the Justice Department to appeal the ruling but are skeptical of its defense. Many claim DOMA was not upheld in Massachusetts for the first time in its history because of weak representation under the Obama administration. President Obama has called DOMA "abhorrent" and has called for its repeal.

"Since they really are advocating for the repeal of DOMA, you have the wolves guarding the chicken house," said Harry Jackson Jr., chairman of Stand4Marriage DC. "And many, many people feel that's the problem. We're not expecting strong intervention from the Justice Department."

Attorneys at the Christian legal firm Liberty Counsel, which have argued in favor of traditional marriage in several national cases, say the Obama administration is intentionally sabotaging DOMA.

In a 2009 brief defending DOMA against a previous challenge, the Justice Department said the government "does not contend that there are legitimate government interests in 'creating a legal structure that promotes the raising of children by both of their biological parents' or that the government's interest in 'responsible procreation' justifies Congress's decision to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman." It pointed instead to research showing children raised by gay and lesbian parents are as likely to be well-adjusted as children raised by opposite-sex parents.

"Children fare best when raised with a mom and a dad," said Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and dean of the

Liberty University School of Law. "Redefining marriage to something it was not intended to be weakens the family and is not in the best interest of children or society. ... The Obama administration must defend DOMA, not sabotage the law."

Jackson said gay marriage supporters may try to use the DOMA ruling to accelerate its repeal. He is urging traditional marriage advocates to contact their representatives in Congress and make marriage a campaign issue this November.

"What we're seeing is same-sex marriage activists pulling out all stops while they have a Congress in place who might vote against traditional marriage and a president who would sign a law to reverse DOMA," Jackson said. "I believe they're going to try to really move this [campaign to reverse DOMA] forward immediately. That would essentially, if passed, make same-sex marriage the law of the land nationally within a year and a half or two years of its passage."

Despite the setbacks for traditional marriage on Thursday, Argentina became the 10th nation to legalize gay marriage. Supporters are optimistic about the future of marriage.

Although gay marriage is legal in five states and the District of Columbia, all 31 states that have put the issue to a vote have upheld traditional marriage. And last week, Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle vetoed a measure that would have conferred the legal rights of marriage to same-sex couples, which bill opponents say would have paved a road to gay marriage in the state.

"I think there are serious challenges to traditional marriage, but the people every time they've spoken they always have given me confidence that they move in the right direction," Staver said. "And despite the series of states where they had some victories about a year ago, the polls have not gone in their favor. So I think still more believe in marriage as one man and one woman, which is good."

Charisma's 35th Anniversary

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The Answer to an Impossible Situation

Your situation may seem impossible at the moment and you may not see any immediate solutions. You may not have the answers, but know you're not alone. There are a lot of people around you suffering from more adverse situations than you.

One young man, David Rothenberg, made it through an impossible situation. In an angry outburst, Rothenberg's father poured kerosene over the young boy's body and the entire room. He then lit the room and Rothenberg's body on fire.

As a result, 95 percent of his body was covered with third-degree burns. The outlook was grim; an estimated five thousand operations would be needed for him to recover. Through it all, David remained full of hope for his future. At the tender age of seven he responded to his adversity with these words.

"I am alive! I am alive! I am alive! I didn't miss out on living! And that is wonderful enough for me."

Rothenberg made it through his adversity and so can you. After all, you are alive. That fact is wonderful enough.

Who Is the Person of the Holy Spirit?

Here are Scriptures to learn more about the person of the Holy Spirit.

But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. -Mark 13:11

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. -Matthew 12:32

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. -Acts 2:38

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. - Luke 2:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. -John 14:26

[The Church Prospers] Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. -Acts 9:31

And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon

Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." -Luke 3:22

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. - Acts 2:4

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" -Luke 11:13

But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. -John 7:39

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

-1 Corinthians 2:13

God's Supernatural Power

Discover other keys to help you flow in God's supernatural power.

{youtube}nNe-xI0Q3PQ{/youtube}

We're Not Dead Yet

Watch video testimonials from Christians who say they died and were brought back to life.

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Milestone Videos

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Watch as Steve Strang interviews Moishe Rosen.

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Footage of the men's conference Promise Keepers.

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Steve Strang interviews Benny Hinn about the Holy Spirit around the world.

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Charisma Now salutes author and Charisma contributor Jamie Buckingham following his passing.

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Jim Bakker's first public appearance after being released from jail.

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Evangelist Claudio Fredizon during the Argentina Revival.

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Christian Center to Open Near Proposed Ground Zero Mosque

A Florida evangelist is responding to efforts to build a multimillion-dollar mosque two blocks from Ground Zero with plans to open a religious center of his own.

Bill Keller (pictured), host of the evangelistic website , said his 9/11 Christian Center near Ground Zero will begin holding Sunday prayer meetings Sept. 5. The services will be held at a hotel in downtown New York until Jan. 1, when the center moves a permanent site. The facility will be open daily and will house a prayer chapel. Local ministers also will lead regular outreach ministry.

“I was in prayer and God said, ‘Listen, if the Muslims can build a temple to their false god at Ground Zero, why can’t

there be a place dedicated to the true God of the Bible on that same area?" said Keller, whose website claims 2.4 million subscribers. "Rather than a [protest] event we're going to have an ongoing work of God right there because the Bible says you combat the darkness with the light."

The proposed Islamic center in lower Manhattan has generated a firestorm of controversy. The \$100 million project calls for a 13-story community center that includes a mosque, performing arts center, meeting rooms and gym. The center, called the Cordoba House, is a joint effort between the American Society for Muslim Advancement and the Cordoba Initiative, which says its mission is to improve relations between Muslims and the West.

Feisal Abdul Rauf, a New York imam and chairman of the Cordoba Initiative, said the center is intended to prevent the next 9/11 and will include a public memorial to the nearly 3,000 victims of the terrorist attack.

"My colleagues and I are the anti-terrorists," Rauf wrote in a *New York Daily News* op-ed. "We are the people who want to embolden the vast majority of Muslims who hate terrorism to stand up to the radical rhetoric. Our purpose is to interweave America's Muslim population into the mainstream society. People who are stakeholders in society, who believe they are welcomed as equal partners, do not want to destroy it. They want to build it."

Thousands have gathered to protest the proposed mosque, saying it is insensitive at best for Muslims to build near a site destroyed by Islamic terrorists.

Last week, the debate became a campaign issue in New York's race for governor when Republican candidate Rick Lazio called on his Democratic rival, Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, to investigate the funding sources of the group behind the Islamic center. In a letter sent to Cuomo's office, Lazio

cited media reports claiming Rauf refused to label Hamas a terrorist organization and that the imam was a "key figure" in a group that sponsored the flotilla that sought to break Israel's Gaza blockade.

In media statements, Cuomo said his office would review any evidence of wrongdoing while accusing Lazio of religious intolerance. On Monday, the Associated Press reported that New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a Republican turned Independent who has defended the planned mosque, said it would be un-American to vet religious organizations.

Many mosque opponents are supporting attempts to confer landmark status on a century-old building at the proposed site. New York's Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing Tuesday to debate the issue, but a vote is not expected until later this summer. A community board decided earlier this month that the building was not structurally significant enough to landmark.

Some critics, including several Christians, say building a mosque so near Ground Zero would be viewed as a victory for Muslim terrorists. They see it as an attempt to establish a beachhead for political Islam in New York.

"The situation in New York is really insulting," said James Lafferty, head of the Virginia Anti-Shariah Task Force who led a protest last month against the building of Cordoba House. "All of the people who were involved in the cowardly attacks on the World Trade Center were from radical Islam ... and they are now establishing a mosque ... in the shadow of the World Trade Center."

Lafferty, whose wife, Andrea Lafferty, is executive director of the Traditional Values Coalition, said the Islamic center is part of efforts to establish Shariah law in the U.S. He points to four Christians who were arrested last month in Dearborn, Mich., while preaching during an Arab festival there

and says the U.S. could become like Europe, which has considered the strict Islamic law in some cases of family law among the region's large Muslim community.

"We've watched this movie before, and in Great Britain and in France and even some of the other countries, there's a pattern, there's sort of a template for all this, and that is massive migration then the establishment of mosques and schools, and then attempts to impose Shariah law on a given territory or enclave," Lafferty said.

Rauf, author of *What's Right With Islam Is What's Right With America*, in 2008 supported efforts to incorporate aspects of Shariah law into British law—a move the Archbishop of Canterbury also endorsed at the time. The Rt. Rev. Rowan Williams told the BBC there was "a place for finding what would be a constructive accommodation with some aspects of Muslim law, as we already do with some other aspects of religious law."

In a 2009 *Washington Post* On Faith op-ed, Rauf said U.S. law and Shariah law had common characteristics. "The principles behind American secular law are similar to Shariah law—that we protect life, liberty and property, that we provide for the common welfare, that we maintain a certain amount of modesty," he wrote. "What Muslims want is to ensure that their secular laws are not in conflict with the Quran or the Hadith, the sayings of Muhammad."

Warren Larson, director of the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies at Columbia International University, said he isn't convinced the mosque is part of a grand conspiracy to establish Muslim dominance in the U.S. But he said building a large Islamic center near Ground Zero sends a different message.

"I'm against [the mosque] because I think it's going to be perceived wrongly," said Larson, who ministered among Muslims

in Pakistan for 40 years. "It's going to be perceived as a possible takeover, but I don't think it is. I don't think that's what Muslims are thinking. They're thinking this is a house of prayer. And Muslims do pray; Muslims don't just blow up buildings."

Too many Christians are responding to Islam out of fear instead of faith, said Rick Love, co-founder of Peace Catalyst and former director of Youth With a Mission's U.S. Muslim outreach. He said the vast majority of Muslims aren't terrorists, and while refusing to take sides on the mosque issue, Love said upholding religious liberty gives the U.S. the moral authority to challenge nations that persecute religious minorities.

For Larson, the real danger is not the encroachment of Islam in the U.S. "I hope it doesn't come across as arrogant, but my main concern in the United States is not Islam, it's not fundamentalist Islam, it's weak Christianity," he said. "It's Christianity that is less than what it should be. ... It's the sense that the church is often not the church. I think our main struggle is not political, but it's really to be good, strong, vibrant Christians who love the Lord and live for Him."

Keller agrees. He has called Islam "a 1,400-year-old lie from hell" and has been the focus of a protest by the Council on American-Islamic Relations. But Keller said his reason for founding the 9/11 Christian Center is not to set up a confrontation with Islam as much as to present an alternative to it.

"I'm looking for people who are lost, hurting, looking for hope and answers; that's who we're looking to attract," said Keller, who plans to commute from St. Petersburg, Fla., to lead the Sunday services until the center opens in January. "That's why Islam has grown. That's why some of the cults and false religions have grown so fast because people, quite

honestly Christians, have hid behind the four walls of the church, they've taken themselves out of the marketplace. ... My whole thing is to get into the marketplace and not battle Islam for souls but battle Satan for souls."

Need Prayer for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NKJV). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for every single believer who names the name of Christ. It not only enables you to live holy; it also empowers you to be a spokeswoman for God in your community, city and the nation. Let Sharyn Culp of His Majesty Ministries pray with you that the Father would endow you with "power from on high." Listen to podcast below.

The Science Behind Tongues

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania conducted a series of medical tests on patients who speak in tongues. The study yielded surprisingly positive results. Watch the video below to learn about the science behind glossolalia.

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