

Gay Marriage Legal in California Beginning June 17

On Wednesday, California's highest court reaffirmed in a 4-3 decision that gay marriage would be legalized.



[] Yesterday, California's highest court denied a stay to its May 15 ruling, which in effect will legalize gay marriage at close of business June 16.

The 4-3 ruling, which split along the same lines as the initial ruling, denied a petition by Christian legal advocacy group Liberty Counsel to stall the May decision until the issue was voted on in November elections.

Earlier this week, a petition signed by more than 1 million California citizens to establish a state constitutional amendment defining marriage as only between a man and a woman was approved for placement on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and a litigator during the California proceedings, argued that only confusion would set in if gay marriages were validated in June and then nullified in November.

"The people will decide in November," he said. "If any same-sex marriage licenses are issued before November, the passage of the constitutional amendment will make them invalid and invisible."

The May 15 California Supreme Court ruling that overturned two state laws banning gay marriage has already had an impact on gay marriage in other states.

Attorneys with another Christian legal group, the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), filed a lawsuit Tuesday to stop New York Gov. David Paterson's directive to state government agencies to recognize gay marriages legalized in other states.

In 2006 the New York Supreme Court upheld a state constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman.

"New Yorkers have a fundamental right to set marriage policy through the legislative process, but the governor has ordered a radical redefinition of marriage without the consent of the governed," said Brian Raum, ADF senior counsel.

Cindy Jacobs, co-founder of Generals International, said the church must fight back against this ruling to halt lasting effects.

"The ramifications of this ruling are huge for our nation as a whole," she responded on her Web site. "It is time for moral activism. When the laws of man break the laws of God, we ought to obey God. Let this ruling by the California Supreme Court wake up the sleeping giant of the church." **—Felicia Mann**