

N.Y. State Senate Rejects Gay Marriage Bill

✖ The New York state Senate rejected a bill Wednesday that would have legalized same-sex marriage.

In a 38-24 vote, lawmakers struck down a gay marriage bill that had been pushed by Gov. David Patterson. No Republicans supported the measure. But even with a one-seat majority, Democrats still did not have enough votes to pass the measure.

Democratic state Sen. Rubén Díaz Sr., a Pentecostal pastor in the Bronx, has been a strident opponent of the gay marriage bill, arguing that marriage should be the union of one man and one woman. In May, he participated in a rally protesting Patterson's moves to push gay marriage. The event reportedly drew some 10,000 people.

"Not only the evangelicals, not only the Jews, not only the Muslims, not only the Catholics, but also the people oppose it," Díaz said before Wednesday's vote, the *New York Times* reported.

Five states have legalized gay marriage, all of them through legislation or court ruling.

The New York State Assembly approved the gay marriage legislation shortly after midnight on Wednesday, the *Times* reported, and Patterson had said he would immediately sign the measure if it made it to his

desk.

Voters in Maine and California repealed their states' gay marriage laws through referendum. But New York does not have a referendum process that allows voters to overturn an act of the Legislature. All 31 states that have voted on the issue have banned gay marriage.

Díaz told *Charisma* in May that he would block moves to legalize gay marriage in his state even if the bill were reintroduced every year. "I'm a preacher. I'm not only a state senator," he said. "I would not vote for that."

The vote was an answer to prayer, said Tom Stiles, director of church relations for New Yorkers Family Research Foundation, which is affiliated with New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedom, a group that lobbied against the bill.

"We're very thankful," Stiles said. "This is not about hating anybody. It's about preserving marriage as we know it."

He said the traditional marriage supporters would have to fight the same battle next year, when Democrats who opposed the measure will likely face a tough re-election battle.

"They're looking at the elections, and they'll target the Democratic senators who voted against the bill," Stiles said of gay marriage supporters. "Christians need to be praying for those men and women."