

D.C. Council Legalizes Gay Marriage

✖ The D.C. City Council legalized same-sex marriage today in an 11-2 vote.

Democratic Mayor Adrian Fenty is expected to sign the bill before Christmas. But because Congress has final say over D.C.'s laws, the bill is subject to a 30-day Congressional review period before becoming law.

Republican Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah, the ranking member of the subcommittee that has oversight over district laws, said the bill would be difficult to derail in Congress with Democrats who support homosexual marriage in the majority.

If the measure is approved, the District of Columbia could begin issuing gay marriage licenses this spring. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont and New Hampshire allow same-sex marriage, though New Hampshire's gay marriage law doesn't take effect until January.

A group of faith leaders known as the Stand4Marriage DC Coalition have for months been calling on district lawmakers to put marriage to a vote. But the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics has rejected their petition for a referendum, saying it would violate human rights laws.

Last month, the coalition filed suit in Washington, D.C., Superior Court to reverse the board's decision. Gay marriage bans have passed in all 31 states that have put the issue to a vote.

"The people of D.C. *do not* support same-sex marriage, and they are entitled to vote on this issue just like the voters in 31 other states had a chance to vote," stated Bishop Harry Jackson, chairman of Stand4Marriage and pastor of Hope

Christian Church in suburban Maryland.

"The City Council's action today is not the final word," he added. "The issue is far from over. We intend to take this issue to the people and fight for their right to vote on the definition of marriage."

Maggie Gallagher, president of the National Organization for Marriage, said her group would join Stand4Marriage in seeking a referendum on the definition of marriage.

"Fundamentally, we do expect that the D.C. City Council is not going to succeed in taking away the charter-given right of the people to vote if they choose to protect marriage in D.C.," Gallagher told Charisma. "I think this is not a done deal. We are fully prepared to work with Bishop Jackson and others in D.C. who are going to fight this bill because we don't believe this is what the majority of the people in the District of Columbia want."

Although not specifically in response to today's gay marriage vote, the Family Research Council and The Call plan to host a national prayer Webcast Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Eastern to intercede for issues such as abortion, health care reform and the preservation of traditional marriage.

Jackson will be among the participants and pastor Jim Garlow, who led the Proposition 8 efforts to overturn the California Supreme Court's gay marriage ruling, as well as Republican lawmakers Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas, Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina, Rep. Randy Forbes of Virginia and Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota.