

Gay Adoption Forced on Northern Ireland—What's Next?

The Northern Ireland health minister has lost a bid to overturn a court ruling in favor of **same-sex adoption** in Northern Ireland.

The Supreme Court rejected Edwin Poots' application to appeal the case, saying it did not raise an arguable point of law.

An earlier court had said restricting joint adoptions to married couples was unlawful, despite overwhelming public support for keeping the law as it is.

In 2007, a Northern Ireland government consultation showed that 95 percent of respondents did not want the law to change to allow **homosexual couples** to adopt in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Executive decided to keep the current law, which says couples must be married to adopt jointly.

But that decision was successfully challenged in court by a human rights quango, a ruling which Poots had hoped to appeal in the U.K. Supreme Court.

Poots says, "It is with disappointment that I note that the request for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court has been refused. I am currently carefully considering the implications for the adoption and children bill, which is currently being drafted and which I intend to introduce in the assembly next year."

A spokesman for the U.K. Supreme Court says, "The Supreme Court issued an order on Oct. 22, 2013, stating that the application did not satisfy the criteria of raising an arguable point of law of general public importance."

Joint adoption by homosexual couples was legalized in England

and Wales in 2002 and came into force in 2005.