

Gay Couples Sue to Have Partner Listed on Child's Birth Certificate

Four gay couples are suing Ohio in order to have their same-sex marriages recognized on their children's birth certificate.

The couples filed a federal lawsuit on Monday, arguing that the state's practice of listing only one partner in a same-sex marriage as the parent goes against the U.S. Constitution.

Ohio voted to keep marriage between a man and a woman in 2004; the couples involved in the legal challenge were married in other states.

The couples' lawyer, Al Gerhardstein, represented two gay couples in their successful lawsuit last year to force Ohio to recognize same-sex marriages on death certificates.

Ohio's attorney general, Mike DeWine, who is appealing the ruling on death certificates, said previously that he has a duty to defend the state's constitution to uphold traditional marriage.

The plaintiffs include three lesbian couples—one woman in each of the marriages is pregnant and is expecting to give birth in the summer.

In other states, including Utah and Oklahoma, federal court judges have ruled that the states' amendments that uphold traditional marriage are unconstitutional.

In response, several religious groups have now joined forces by filing a submission to a federal appeals court, arguing that marriage should be kept between a man and a woman in Utah and Oklahoma.

The submission, representing Roman Catholics, evangelicals and other groups, says, "We believe that children, families, society and our nation thrive best when husband-wife marriage is upheld and strengthened as a cherished, primary social institution."

Earlier this month, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced a new policy extending rights to couples in a same-sex marriage across the country, prompting criticism from traditional marriage supporters.

The new regulations from the Department of Justice include rights to visit a partner in prison, federal benefits for surviving partners of police officers killed while on duty, and allowing couples "spousal privilege" in court.

Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, says, "This is just the latest in a series of moves by the Obama administration, and in particular the Department of Justice, to undermine the authority and sovereignty of the states to make their own determinations regulating the institution of marriage."

Brown says these changes "serve as a potent reminder of why it is simply a lie to say that redefining marriage doesn't affect everyone in society."