

Same-Sex Marriage Legalized in Washington State

Marriage between homosexuals is now legal in Washington state. The governor signed the measure into law Monday, making it the seventh state in the nation to **legalize gay marriage**.

Gay rights supporters and lawmakers crowded into Washington's capitol in Olympia to watch Gov. Chris Gregoire sign the bill into law.

"I'm proud that our **same-sex couples** will no longer be treated as separate, but equal," the governor said. "They will be equal in the great state of Washington."

Gregoire said she was finally convinced to sign the bill after being assured that churches would not be forced to perform **same-sex ceremonies**.

"This is amazing. We didn't think it was going to happen in our lifetime," Sen. Ed Murray, D-43rd Legislative District.

"No matter what the future holds, nothing will take this moment in history away from us," said Cara South-Ciero, a gay marriage supporter.

The law will go into effect on June 7, but opponents say the victory celebrations will be short lived. They plan to collect 120,000 votes by June 6 to put the issue on a statewide ballot—meaning the law will be put on hold until voters have the final say.

"So it really is a short-lived celebration as far as people actually being allowed to be married in the state of Washington," said John Geis, the director of government relations at the Family Policy Institute of Washington.

"It's not going to happen until November," he added.

At a town hall meeting on Monday, Republican presidential candidate **Rick Santorum** encouraged conservative state lawmakers to continue to fight the new law.

“There are ebbs and flows in every battle, and this is not the final word,” Santorum said.

Meanwhile on the East Coast Monday, the New Jersey state Senate passed a bill recognizing **gay marriage**. However, Republican Gov. Chris Christie has promised to veto the measure if it reaches his desk.