

Supreme Court Justice Denies Bid to Stop Calif. Gay Marriages

A U.S. **Supreme Court** justice on Sunday rejected a long-shot bid to halt **same-sex marriages** in California, days after the high court let stand a trial judge's order declaring the ban unconstitutional.

Justice Anthony Kennedy denied the application verbally, spokeswoman Kathy Arberg told Reuters.

Supporters of the gay marriage ban known as **Proposition 8**, which California voters approved in 2008, asked the high court on Saturday to overrule a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals order that lifted an injunction barring same-sex unions.

"I think it's time for proponents of Prop 8 to stop trying to stop people from getting married and turn their attention to something else," said Ted Bontros, a lawyer for the American Foundation for Equal Rights, which sponsored the federal court challenge to Prop 8.

Marriage ceremonies of gay and lesbian couples went ahead since a panel of the appeals court in San Francisco removed its stay on Proposition 8 on Friday.

The stay had been in force while the decision striking down the so-called **Prop 8**, a state constitutional amendment passed by voters in 2008, was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Political supporters of the measure were left to appeal the case because state elected officials declined to defend it.

But the justices on Wednesday ruled Prop 8 proponents lacked legal standing to defend the ban, a decision that left the trial judge's ruling intact and cleared the way for gay

marriage in the state to resume.

The **Supreme Court** had said its ruling would not go into effect for at least 25 days, the amount of time normally given the losing party, in this case, Prop 8 backers, to seek a rehearing of the matter.

But California Attorney General Kamala Harris publicly urged the appeals court to lift its stay sooner than that, and on Friday the 9th Circuit did so in a surprise move that prompted a flurry of hastily arranged same-sex weddings up and down the state.

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