

Supreme Court Puts Hold on Gay Marriage in Virginia

The U.S. Supreme Court stopped **gay marriage** in Virginia from going ahead on Wednesday, staying an appeals court ruling that had struck down a state ban.

The court granted a stay application filed by opponents of gay marriage. The action was not a ruling on the merits of gay marriage, but means a July 28 pro-gay marriage ruling by the Richmond, Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will not be implemented while litigation continues.

The high court issued its brief order less than 24 hours before gay and lesbian couples in Virginia could have begun applying to be married.

The **Supreme Court** issued a similar order in January blocking gay marriage from going ahead in Utah. So the court's order on the Virginia law was not wholly unexpected.

The Supreme Court is expected to take up at least one case on gay marriage in its coming term, which starts in October and ends in June. There are already three cases the justices can choose from pending at the court. They involve fights over the bans in Virginia, Utah and Oklahoma.

Michele McQuigg, Prince William County clerk of court, had filed the Virginia stay application last week seeking to prevent the appeals court ruling from going into effect.

"The Supreme Court acted wisely in restraining the lower court from implementing a ruling of this magnitude before the high court has a chance to decide the issue," Byron Babione, a lawyer for McQuigg, said in a statement.

The state's Democratic attorney general, Mark Herring, who

backs gay marriage, and opponents of **same-sex marriage** have already said they would like the Supreme Court to be have the ultimate say in the case. Herring had backed the call for the delay of the lower court ruling.

Since a June 2013 ruling in the *United States v. Windsor* case struck down a federal law defining marriage as between one man and one woman, nearly 30 federal and state courts have ruled against bans on same-sex marriage at the state level. Only one court in the past 14 months has ruled in favor of a state ban.

Nineteen of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia allow same-sex marriage.

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