

Tennessee County Votes Against Seeking Mercy From God's Divine Wrath

A Tennessee county commission on Tuesday turned down voting on a resolution asking God to spare the county from divine wrath sparked by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling legalizing gay marriage.

The Blount County Commission voted 10-5 to reject an agenda that included the resolution and adjourned without debate. Onlookers crowding the meeting room, most dressed in red in support of same-sex marriage, yelled in frustration, and one shouted "cowards" at the commissioners.

Commissioner Karen Miller, who introduced the resolution, said she had no idea that the agenda would be turned down.

"I was totally in the dark," she told reporters. Miller said she was "very disappointed, because people have a right to speak."

Miller said she likely would reintroduce her resolution. Maryville is a town of some 27,000 people about 15 miles south of Knoxville.

Her "resolution condemning judicial tyranny and petitioning God's mercy" called on the state to join Blount County in fighting against the Supreme Court's June ruling legalizing gay marriage.

The text requests that God "pass us by in His Coming Wrath and not destroy our County as He did Sodom and Gomorrah."

A similar resolution without the appeal to God's mercy was passed last month in nearby Greene County. A bill in Tennessee's legislature introduced two weeks ago calls on the

state to nullify the Supreme Court ruling.

In the neighboring state of Kentucky, county clerk Kim Davis has gained national attention for refusing to issue marriage licenses to gay couples because of her religious beliefs.

Protesters from the Tennessee Equality Project, a gay rights group, filled most of the meeting room and about 100 outside the building were unable to enter. Many had been protesting throughout the day.

"I respect others' opinions. I don't agree with those opinions, but I feel like when it comes down to it, religion has no place at all in government," said Ashley Abbott, a Blount County resident and TEP member.

Khristrine Weick, one of the two anti-gay marriage protesters outside the commission building, said she backed Miller's resolution.

"I believe if we continue to spit (at) God in the face, we're going to get it," she said. {eo}

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