

New Hampshire House Opposed a Same-Sex Marriage Bill Because it Protected Religious Liberties

Here is a letter from Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel, a religious freedoms law firm.

✖ On Wednesday by a vote of 188-186, the New Hampshire House of Representatives voted down a same-sex marriage bill because it contained a religious liberty protection clause. The state Senate had previously passed the bill along party lines by a vote of 14-10. Governor George Lynch, who is opposed to same-sex marriage, said he would veto the bill unless it contained a religious liberty protection amendment. The amendment was added to the House version of the bill, and that is where it met opposition by an openly homosexual member of the House, who lobbied against the bill because of the amendment.

The religious liberty protection amendment would affirm the right of clergy and others affiliated with religious organizations to refuse to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies. However, an openly homosexual state Representative, Steve Vaillancourt from Manchester, led the opposition to the bill because he was opposed to the religious liberty amendment and said the House should not be “bullied” by the Governor. Vaillancourt supports the prior version of the bill that did not provide protections for clergy. The earlier bill passed both chambers, but the Governor said he would veto the prior bill because it lacked the religious liberty protection amendment. There are not enough votes to override a veto by the Governor.

Mathew D. Staver, Founder of Liberty Counsel and Dean of Liberty University School of Law, commented: "The good news is that the same-sex marriage bill did not pass. The bad news is that some legislators want to force clergy to perform same-sex marriages. This bill failed to garner enough votes because it contained a clause designed to protect clergy and religious institutions from being forced to conduct same-sex marriages. This should be a wakeup call for people who cherish freedom. The same-sex marriage agenda being advanced is on a collision course with the values and freedoms shared by most Americans. This is clear evidence that the end game is to force clergy and religious institutions to not just accept, but to celebrate and participate in same-sex marriages."