

## Topics / Same-Sex Marriage / Same-Sex Marriage: Timeline

**2014** - On February 12, a federal judge strikes down as unconstitutional a portion of Kentucky's same sex marriage ban. The state must now recognize same-sex marriages performed outside the state. Meanwhile, states courts in Virginia and Utah overturn same-sex marriage bans but immediately stay the rulings to allow for appeals.

**2013** - A December 19 state supreme court ruling makes New Mexico the 17th state to legalize same-sex marriages.

**2013** - On November 13 and 21, the states of Hawaii and Illinois, respectively, pass laws making same sex marriage legal. With the passage of the laws, 16 states plus the District of Columbia allow same sex marriage. (Illinois will be the 16th state when its law goes into effect in June 2014).

**2013** - On October 21, New Jersey becomes the 14th state to recognize same-sex marriage after a state supreme court ruling. The court ruled that, as a result of *United States v. Windsor*, New Jersey had to legalize same-sex marriage. After a state supreme court did not recognize Gov. Chris Christie's request for a stay, same-sex marriage officially became legal.

**2013** - On June 26, the Supreme Court strikes down Section 3 of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, invalidating the provision that denied legally married same-sex couples recognition under federal law. In a separate ruling the Court denies standing to the petitioners in a second case, clearing the way same-sex marriage in California.

**2013** - Minnesota becomes the 12th state to allow same sex unions on May 14. The law will go into effect on August 1.

**2013** - On May 7, the Delaware state Senate approves a same-sex marriage bill; the governor signs it into law on the same day.

**2013** - On May 2, Rhode Island becomes the 10th state to legalize same-sex marriage.

**2013** - On March 26 and 27, the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments on same-sex marriage for the first time. The cases involve California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage, and the Defense of Marriage Act, which limits federal recognition of marriage to unions between "one man and one woman."

**2013** - Colorado legalizes civil unions on March 21.

**2012** - On November 6, Maine, Maryland, and Washington become the first states to approve same-sex marriage by popular vote. The propositions in Maryland and Washington were placed on the ballot to challenge legislative actions, while in Maine the vote was to overturn a ban previously enacted by the legislature.

**2012** - On October 18, the 2d Circuit Court of Appeals strikes down the federal Defense of Marriage Act as unconstitutional. The majority opinion in the case also argues that questions of discrimination against homosexuals deserve the same heightened scrutiny by the courts as discrimination against minorities and women.

**2012** - On May 19 the board of directors for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People passes a resolution supporting marriage equality as an extension of the civil rights organization's commitment to equal protection under the law.

**2012** - In a May 9 interview with ABC News, President Barack Obama endorses same-sex marriage saying "it is important for me personally to go ahead and affirm that same-sex couples should be able to get married." The president, although openly supportive of civil unions, had previously declined to publicly support same-sex marriage, stating instead that his ideas on the issue were "evolving."

**2012** - On May 8, North Carolina voters approve Proposition 1, which amends the state constitution to ban gay marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships. While proponents argue that the measure is necessary to further protect traditional marriage, critics charge that the measure threatens to undermine domestic violence laws and the rights of unmarried heterosexual couples.

**2012** - On March 1, Maryland governor Martin O'Malley signs a bill legalizing same-sex marriage. The new law is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2013, giving opponents time to place a challenge to the measure on the November ballot.

**2012** - On February 17, New Jersey governor Chris Christie vetoes a bill legalizing same-sex marriage and suggests that the state instead appoint an ombudsman to strengthen the state's law regarding civil unions.

**2012** - Governor Chris Gregoire signs a bill on February 13 that legalizes same-sex marriage in Washington state as of June 7, 2012. Opponents of the measure launch a number of challenges, including a ballot initiative, to keep the law from going into effect.

**2012** - On February 7, a three-judge panel from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals rules that California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage, is unconstitutional. Proponents of the measure plan to appeal.

**2011** - In June, the New York State Legislature passes a bill legalizing same-sex marriage. Promptly signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the Marriage Equality Act makes New York the sixth and most populous state to allow same-sex marriage.

**2011** - The Barack Obama administration announces that it believes the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional and will no longer defend the act in court. However, the administration is still legally obligated to enforce the law until the Supreme Court rules on its constitutionality or Congress repeals it.

**2011** - In February, Illinois governor Patrick Quinn signs into law legislation that legalizes civil unions between same-sex couples in the state and attributes to these unions many rights previously reserved only for opposite-sex married couples.

**2010** - On August 4, the U.S. District Court of Northern California rules that Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in the state of California, is unconstitutional.

**2010** - Representative Mark Souder (R-Ind.), a vocal opponent of same-sex marriage, resigns his post in the U.S. Congress because of the revelation of his extra-marital affair with a staffer.

**2010** - Reporters learn that Reverend George Alan Rekers, a founder of the anti-same-sex marriage Family Research Council, hired a male escort from the Web site rentboy.com to accompany him on a ten-day trip to Europe.

Rekers explains that he needed someone to carry his luggage.

**2010** - In January, the New Jersey state senate rejects a proposal to legalize same-sex marriage by a vote of 20-14.

**2009** - The District of Columbia city council votes to approve legislation granting equal marriage rights to same-sex couples.

**2009** - Also in November, voters in Washington State decline to overturn the state's "everything-but-marriage" law, making the state the sixth state in the union to provide same-sex couples with rights equal to those of opposite-sex couples

**2009** - In November, voters in Maine overturn the state legislature's act permitting same-sex marriage.

**2009** - The New Hampshire legislature passes and governor John Lynch signs a bill legalizing same-sex marriage. The bill takes effect on January 1, 2010.

**2009** - The legislature of Nevada overrides governor Jim Gibbons's veto of an act providing domestic partnerships for same-sex couples.

**2009** - On May 26, the California Supreme Court upholds the results of the November 4, 2008, vote on Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a contract between one man and one woman.

**2009** - In May, the Washington State legislature passes and Governor Chris Gregoire signs an "everything-but-marriage" bill that grants same-sex couples all legal rights available to opposite-sex couples, with the one exception of the name given to the entity.

**2009** - The state legislature passes and on May 6 Governor John Baldacci signs a law extending full marriage rights to same-sex couples in Maine.

**2009** - On April 7, same-sex marriage becomes legal in Vermont.

**2009** - The Iowa Supreme Court affirms an earlier ruling by district judge Robert B. Hanson, declaring the state's ban on same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional.

**2008** - Voters in California, Arizona, and Florida adopt constitutional amendments defining marriage as a contract between one man and one woman.

**2008** - Voters in Arizona change their mind and approve a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage in the state they had previously voted against in 2006.

**2008** - The Supreme Court of Connecticut rules that the state constitution guarantees same-sex couples equal right to marriage. The first same-sex marriages in the state are performed on November 12.

**2008** - The Maryland Court of Appeals rules on a 4-3 vote that the state's ban on same-sex marriages does not violate the state's constitutional guarantees of equal treatment for all citizens.

**2008** - District Court justice Robert B. Hanson of Polk County, Iowa, rules on August 30 that the state's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional, and that same-sex couples are allowed to marry in the state.

**2008** - A limited form of domestic partnership between same-sex couples becomes legal in Maryland on July 1.

**2008** - The California Supreme Court rules in May that the state's ban on same-sex marriage violates the state's constitutional guarantee of equality for all citizens.

**2008** - The Michigan Supreme Court rules in May that local governments and public colleges and universities are not allowed to offer same-sex couples the same benefits available to opposite-sex couples because of voters' earlier approval of a constitutional amendment banning marriage between two people of the same sex.

**2008** - A law creating domestic partnerships for same-sex couples takes effect in Oregon. The law was passed by the state legislature in May 2007.

**2008** - On the first of the year, a law establishing civil unions for same-sex couples goes into effect in New Hampshire.

**2007** - A law establishing domestic partnerships for same-sex couples takes effect in July in Washington State.

**2007** - Massachusetts legislators vote on June 14 to uphold its 2004 decision to approve same-sex marriage, making it impossible for further actions against that policy until 2012.

**2007** - The Alaska Supreme Court rules that the state is required to provide the same benefits to same-sex couples in its employ as it does to opposite-sex couples. Governor Sarah Palin says she disagrees with the ruling, but will comply with it.

**2006** - In November, voters in Arizona reject a constitutional amendment that would have banned same-sex marriages in the state. Voters in eight other states adopt such an amendment, and Arizona voters reconsider their decision in 2008.

**2006** - The New Jersey Supreme Court rules that same-sex couples are entitled to legal recognition equivalent to that of heterosexual marriage. In a 4-3 vote, the justices order the state legislature to establish some sort of equivalent legal entity, whether it be called marriage, civil union, or domestic partnership. The three dissenting justices do so because they would go even further and require that same-sex couples be allowed to marry in the state.

**2006** - The New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, rules on July 6 that the state constitution does not guarantee same-sex couples the right to marry.

**2006** - The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, in a March 30 ruling, relies on a 1913 law to rule that out-of-state couples may not be issued marriage licenses if they are not eligible to marry in their own states.

**2005** - The state of Connecticut adopts legislation establishing civil unions for same-sex couples.

**2005** - On April 7, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg orders city agencies to recognize legal same-sex marriages from other states and countries.

**2004** - The U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear a case from one citizen and 11 legislators from Massachusetts in an effort to overturn that state's law on same-sex marriage

**2004** - In the November elections, 13 states pass constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage, some of which also include civil unions and/or domestic partnerships.

**2004** - The first legal marriages between same-sex couples in the United States take place in Massachusetts on May 17.

**2004** - On February 24, President George W. Bush announces his support for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution defining marriage as a civil right available only to couples of opposite sexes.

**2003** - The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issues its ruling in *Goodrich v. Department of Public Health* that the prohibition on same-sex marriage in the Commonwealth violates the state constitution.

**2003** - In a decision reversing *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986), the U.S. Supreme Court rules by a 6-3 vote that a Texas law criminalizing sodomy was unconstitutional and that, according to Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, "adults may choose to enter upon this relationship in the confines of their homes and their own private lives and still retain their dignity as free persons."

**2000** - Voters in Nebraska pass a constitutional amendment in November by a vote of 70% to 30% banning same-sex marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships.

**2000** - A law in Vermont permitting civil unions between same-sex couples takes effect on April 1.

**1998** - The voters of Alaska approve ballot measure 2 on November 3, which amends the state constitution to restrict marriage to couples of the opposite sex.

**1998** - In November, voters in the state of Hawaii approve by a vote of 69%-31% an amendment to the state constitution limiting marriage to one man and one woman.

**1998** - Alaska superior court judge Peter A. Michalski rules in February that the state's marriage laws violate the state constitution and, therefore, the state must provide a compelling reason for withholding a marriage license from two men who wish to marry.

**1996** - A trial judge in Hawaii rules that the state has provided no compelling reason for restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples. He delays implementation of his ruling a day later to allow the state supreme court to consider his decision.

**1996** - The U.S. Congress passes and President Bill Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act, which bans the U.S. government from recognizing same-sex marriages performed in any state or any other nation.

**1995** - Utah becomes the first state to pass a so-called defense of marriage act (DOMA) specifically prohibiting any legal relationship between two individuals of the same sex.

**1993** - The Supreme Court of Hawaii rules that the state's ban on same-sex marriage is illegal unless the state can provide a compelling reason for the necessity of such a ban.

**1990** - In the case *Matter of Cooper*, the New York Supreme Court rules that a gay man cannot sue to inherit from his deceased partner, who has left by will about 80 percent of his estate to a former partner. The appellant claims

that New York inheritance laws should apply even though the state refuses to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The court rules that state laws do not apply, and that marriage in the state is limited to couples of the opposite sex.

**1989** - The New York Court of Appeals rules that a same-sex couple having lived together for at least 10 years can be considered a “family unit” for the purpose of rent control. The ruling is the first time that a state court has defined a same-sex couple as a “family.”

**1987** - An estimated 2,000 same-sex couples are “married” on the steps of the Internal Revenue Service building during the March on Washington as a statement against the unequal treatment of same-sex couples under the nation's tax laws.

**1986** - In the case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that homosexual activity between adults in the privacy of their own home is not protected by the U.S. Constitution.

**1984** - The city of Berkeley, California, becomes the first legal entity in the United States to create a formal, legal recognition of same-sex relationships. It establishes an entity known as a domestic partnership that provides many of the same benefits for same-sex couples as are available in a traditional marriage. These benefits extend only to areas controlled by city law.

**1975** - Virginia becomes the fourth state to prohibit same-sex marriage.

**1974** - Under the equal rights amendment to the state's constitution, a same-sex couple in Washington State, John F. Singer and Paul Barwick, file suit against King County Auditor Lloyd Hara to force him to grant them a marriage license (*Singer v. Hara*). The King County superior court rules that the amendment does not apply to marriage, only to discriminatory treatment to individuals on the basis of their sex.

**1973** - Maryland becomes the first state in the union to specifically ban marriage between two individuals of the same sex. Prior to this time, no specific prohibition of same-sex marriage existed in any state constitution or legal code.

**1972** - Two Kentucky women, Marjorie Jones and Tracy Knight, apply for a marriage license at the Jefferson County courthouse. They are denied a license, and their appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Kentucky is also denied.

**1971** - Baker and McConnell are granted a marriage license in Blue Earth County, Minnesota, and are married by a Methodist minister, making them the first same-sex couple to be legally married in the United States.

**1970** - Two Minnesota men, Jack Baker and James McConnell, apply for a marriage license in Hennepin County, Minnesota. They are refused and proceed to sue the county (*Baker v. Nelson*). Their case eventually is appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which declines to hear the case for lack of any “substantial federal question.”

**1967** - The U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*, rules that the state of Virginia's law against marriage between two individuals of different races is unconstitutional. The vote is nine-to-zero. The court bases its decision on the proposition that “[m]arriage is one of the ‘basic civil rights of man,’ fundamental to our very existence and survival.”

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