



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 8, 2012

Battle for Marriage Heating up in Illinois

Emboldened by the refusal of state officials to defend a law defining marriage as only between a man and a woman, a number of homosexual couples in Illinois have filed a pair of lawsuits against the state in hopes of forcing the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex partnerships.

Religion Today reported that the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois and the New York-based homosexual group Lambda Legal are representing at least 25 same-sex couples who complained that they were denied marriage licenses in Cook County. “Both suits challenge a state law that defines marriage as between a man and woman, arguing that the Illinois Constitution guarantees the right for same-sex couples to marry under due process and equality clauses,” reported *Religion Today*.



John Knight, director of the [ACLU's LGBT Project](#), said that his group would accept nothing less than full marriage equality for its homosexual clients. “What defines a marriage is love and commitment, our hopes and dreams for a life with the person we most love in all the world,” he insisted. “Creating civil unions — a separate, novel, and poorly understood status for gay and lesbian couples — does not honor the devotion of our families, nor fully protect them, but instead sends a powerful message that our families are inadequate and undeserving.” He added that it is “time for Illinois to join the growing list of states that provide same-sex couples with the dignity and respect that can only come through marriage.”

Thus far, six states — Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont — along with the District of Columbia have passed laws legalizing homosexual “marriage.” *Religion Today* recalled that a “lawsuit, filed by Lambda Legal, challenging an Iowa law that barred same-sex marriage prompted the Iowa Supreme Court to legalize it in 2009.”

Camilla Taylor of [Lambda Legal](#) complained that the law passed by Illinois legalizing civil unions for “gays” but stopping short of marriage causes her group’s homosexual clients — along with their children — hurt and confusion. “These couples and their children share a dream of being part of a married family,” Taylor declared. “By excluding them from marriage, and relegating them to civil unions, our government has marked them as different and worth less than other Illinois families — and that is exactly how others treat them. They have suffered disrespect in schools, workplaces, hospitals, and in their everyday interactions with government for long enough. They should have the freedom to marry — it’s just time.”

Tanya Lazaro, a Chicago police officer and one of the plaintiffs in the ACLU case, insisted that her lesbian relationship with Elizabeth Matos “is not about some legal benefits and protections, but about



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love for one another. We love each other; we are committed to one another. Anything short of marriage does not recognize that love and commitment.” Matos added that “it is remarkable that Tanya risks her life each day to go out into the city of Chicago and keep people safe, but the law does not recognize fully the family that we have built together.”

Similarly, Jim Darby, one of the plaintiffs in the Lambda Legal suit, said that he and his partner Patrick Bova, who “fell in love” in 1963 and have been together ever since, “know very well what it means to love, honor, and cherish. I have lived in Illinois all my life and I want to marry Patrick here. A civil union doesn’t reflect what we mean to each other.”

Pro-family leaders in Illinois recalled that homosexual activists were happy when the state passed its civil unions law, and even used it to force a pair of Christian non-profit organizations to drop their successful adoption programs because they refused to facilitate the adoption of children by homosexual couples.

“It’s now painfully obvious that the purpose for securing civil unions legislation last year was to gain legal leverage in the attempt to overturn the Illinois law that defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman,” said David Smith, executive director of the [Illinois Family Institute](#) (IFI).

Laurie Higgins, a cultural analyst for IFI, argued that the legal benefits and responsibilities that come with marriage are not the highest priority of homosexual activists attempting to force the legalization of their lifestyle. The key goal is really the eradication of any cultural distinction between traditional marriage and homosexual partnerships. “Homosexual activists and their ideological allies will exploit any means to achieve their goal of eradicating moral disapproval of homosexuality,” Higgins warned, “including censorship, propaganda, demagoguery, slander, and judicial activism.”

While Illinois’ Governor Pat Quinn and State Attorney General Lisa Madigan should be stepping forward to defend their state’s marriage law, the two have been among the high-profile supporters of the homosexual lawsuits. Quinn has applauded the efforts to overturn the marriage law, and, reported the [Chicago Tribune](#), Madigan has changed sides and will actually present arguments in favor of the two lawsuits.

Even the clerk of Cook County, David Orr, who is named as a defendant in the suit for his refusal to issue marriage licenses to homosexual couples, issued a statement in favor of the suits. “The time is long past due for the State of Illinois to allow County Clerks to issue marriage licenses to couples who want to make that commitment,” the statement said. “I hope this lawsuit clears the last hurdle to achieving equal marriage rights for all.”

But Peter Breen, executive director and legal counsel for the Chicago-based [Thomas More Society](#), argued that the suits “have no merit,” and challenged Madigan’s refusal to perform her duty to defend the state’s laws. “The Attorney General’s job is to defend the laws of Illinois, not deep-pocketed special interest groups,” Breen pointed out. “True equality comes from each citizen’s vote being equally valued and the legislative process being respected, not circumvented by those who wish to subvert the will of the people.”

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