



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 16, 2010

Argentina Legalizes Homosexual Marriage

A wave of same-sex couples may be bearing down on the metropolis of Buenos Aires in the coming weeks and months after Argentina became the first Latin American country to legalize homosexual marriage. The 33-27 vote from Argentina's senate came on July 15 following intense debate that included appeals against the move from the country's Catholic and evangelical leadership.



Passage of the law means that same-sex partners will not only be free to marry in Argentina, but will also have the same legal rights and protections as traditional married couples.

Following the vote, Maria Rachid of the Argentine Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Federation declared that her country would now take its place in the world as "a more just and democratic country," adding that the law "not only recognizes the rights of our families, but also the possibility of having access to health care, to leave a pension, to leave our assets to the people with whom we have shared many years of life, including our children."

Argentina's President, Cristina Fernandez, had made passage of the law a priority for her administration and called the vote "a positive step that defends the rights of the minority." But as debate played out across Argentina, the issue had become a divisive one even among her own supporters, and observers were speculating that Fernandez's government could suffer severe backlash for her endorsement of a lifestyle many of her fellow countrymen find repulsive.

Outside of Buenos Aires, a city that has gone out of its way to make itself attractive to homosexual tourists, Argentina retains a strongly conservative base that includes both Catholic and evangelical Christians, and as the campaign for homosexual marriage heated up this group came together in a strong display of opposition. Led by Catholic Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, some 60,000 Argentines demonstrated in the nation's capital prior to the vote, with Bergoglio emphasizing that children in Argentina "have the right to be raised and educated by a father and a mother," and that "everyone loses" with the legalization of homosexual marriage.

While some opponents of homosexual marriage had proposed the option of legalizing civil unions such as exist in Uruguay and parts of Mexico and Brazil, homosexual activists emphasized that nothing less than fully legalized marriage with all the benefits would do, and with some last-minute political maneuvering a coalition of homosexual-friendly politicians gave them their desire.

Argentina now joins nine other countries that have legalized homosexual marriage: Belgium, Canada, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden. And while no similar federal law has been passed in the United States, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and the District of Columbia (Washington, DC) have all passed legislation legalizing homosexual marriage.



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Photo of gay pride flag outside Argentina's Congress: AP Images



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