

CCLU Plans To Challenge State's Ban On Gay Marriage

Group Launched Successful Lawsuit In Massachusetts

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HARTFORD, Conn. -- A gay rights organization that successfully challenged the Massachusetts marriage law planned to announce Wednesday it will contest the constitutionality of Connecticut's marriage laws, which exclude same-sex couples.



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Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, or GLAD, is joining forces with the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union. A news conference was scheduled at a downtown Hartford hotel at 2 p.m.

GLAD was to file the lawsuit Wednesday in New Haven Superior Court. Seven Connecticut couples are plaintiffs in the case.

The lead attorney for the Connecticut legal challenge will be Mary Bonauto, according to Carisa Cunningham, a GLAD spokeswoman. Bonauto represented the seven gay couples in the landmark Massachusetts case that led to the legalization of gay marriage, beginning May 17.

She was also involved in the Vermont case, where same-sex couples can now seek civil unions.

Katy and Kristen Gossman of Meriden, who were married in Massachusetts in May, are plaintiffs in a different case challenging a 1913 law in Massachusetts barring out-of-state gay couples from marrying there.

They said they hope to see the marriage laws change in Connecticut so they can save their own marriage.

"We're happy about this lawsuit because if we win then there would be no questions asked about our marriage license in Massachusetts," said Katy Gossman, a special agent with the FBI.

Connecticut same-sex marriage advocates have resisted going to court for years, instead working to change state law.

Anne Stanback, president of Love Makes a Family, a same-sex marriage advocacy group in Connecticut, said that will not change. However, her organization is supporting the lawsuit.

"We have always said we would never close the door on supporting a lawsuit in Connecticut, but that we wanted to begin the process in the legislature," said Stanback. She also said her coalition plans to lobby for a same-sex marriage bill when the new legislative session begins in January.

"We strongly support the lawsuit by GLAD," she said. "We believe something as important as the fundamental right to marriage must be fought on all fronts."

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