

Hello, davissp | MyNews | Log out

Site Search Web

Search enhanced by Google



- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Newspaper Ads](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Cars](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Classified](#)

MARKETPLACE

- [> Find a job](#)
- [> Buy a car](#)
- [> Find real estate](#)
- [> Find a mortgage](#)
- [> Rent an apartment](#)
- [> See Classified ads](#)
- [> Place Classified ad](#)
- [> Shopping](#)
- [> Coupons](#)

News

- [Columnists](#)
- [Connecticut](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Election 2004](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Latest News](#)
- [Lottery](#)
- [Nation/World](#)
- [Photo/Video Gallery](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Special Reports](#)
- [Today's Courant](#)
- [Towns](#)
- [Traffic](#)
- [Weather](#)

Entertainment

- [Arts & Theater](#)
- [Attractions](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Dining](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Movies](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Teens](#)
- [TV & Radio](#)

Sports

- [Auto Racing](#)
- [Baseball](#)
- [Basketball](#)
- [> UConn Men](#)
- [> UConn Women](#)
- [College Sports](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Football](#)
- [> UConn](#)
- [High School Sports](#)
- [Hockey](#)
- [Scores & Stats](#)

Business

- [Columnists](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Web 100](#)
- [Your Money](#)

FROM TODAY'S COURANT

Gays File Lawsuit To Wed In State

■ Advocates Taking Issue To The Courts

August 26, 2004

By DANIELA ALTIMARI, Courant Staff Writer

Three months after Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to permit gay marriage, seven same-sex couples filed a lawsuit Wednesday seeking the right to marry in Connecticut.

Standing shoulder to shoulder at a mid-afternoon press conference in Hartford, the couples said they deserve the same legal protections that heterosexual couples enjoy.

"We love each other and we are looking forward to having marriage protect our love," said Suzanne Artis, 33, a public school teacher who lives in Middletown with her partner, Geraldine Artis, and their three children.

The plaintiffs applied for marriage licenses on Monday in Madison, but were denied. State law does not permit same-sex couples to marry.

The lawsuit represents a sharp shift in strategy for Connecticut advocates of gay marriage. For the past four years, they have been lobbying the legislature to change the state's marriage laws.

"And that will stay our focus," said Anne Stanback, executive director of Love Makes a Family, a coalition of organizations and individuals working to expand Connecticut's marriage laws. "But this is too important an issue not to be fighting on all fronts."

State Sen. Andrew McDonald, D-Stamford, co-chairman of the legislature's judiciary committee, said he expects to see a number of proposals this legislative session - those that would legalize same-sex marriage, domestic partnerships or civil unions as well as efforts to pass a so-called Defense of Marriage Act, which explicitly outlaws gay marriage.

Brian Brown, executive director of the Connecticut Family Institute and an opponent of gay marriage, said he isn't surprised that the advocates have turned to the courts.

"The same thing that happened in Massachusetts is about to happen here," he said. "If you don't win in the legislative process, you get judges to make law out of thin air."

The Connecticut Civil Liberties Union will argue the case

UTILITIES

- [E-mail story](#)
- [Printer-friendly version](#)

MORE HEADLINES

- [His Past Unfolds, And Coach Resigns](#)
- [Shiite Cleric Calls For Action](#)
- [Ethics Chief Is Now Target](#)

TOP JOBS

from [CareerBuilder](#)

RECEPTIONIST
GABRIELLI TRUCK SALES

SALES EXECUTIVE / REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

SOCIAL SERVICES / SOCIALIZATION SPECIALIST
CHRYSLIS CENTER, INC.

SALES / CUSTOMER SERVICE
ABCO WELDING SUPPLY

CONTROLS ENGINEER / POST SALE SERVICE ENGINEER
GE CONSUMER AND INDUSTRIAL

CLASS A DRIVER
UNITEX TEXTILE

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES
PARKWAY PAVILION

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ATTORNEY
CBIA

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

► **Lifestyle**

[Books](#)
[Celebrity](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Food](#)
[Home & Garden](#)
[New England Guide](#)
[Northeast Magazine](#)
[Style & Shopping](#)
[Travel](#)

► **Opinion**

[Columnists](#)
[Commentary](#)
[Editorials](#)
[Letters](#)
[Other Opinion](#)
[Place](#)

► **Services**

[Business Directory](#)
[Find a Person](#)
[Search By Phone #](#)
[Courant Corrections](#)
[Courant Archives](#)
[Courant Photo Reprints](#)
[Courant Permissions](#)
[ctnow.com Media Kit](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Reader Representative](#)
[Maps/Directions](#)
[Site Map](#)

along with the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the Boston-based civil rights group that successfully challenged Massachusetts' marriage laws.

Teresa Younger, executive director of the CCLU, said the courts have always played an important role in protecting civil rights. "If we had left it to [the legislative branch], we wouldn't have ... Brown vs. the Board of Education," she said, referring to the landmark school desegregation case.

For the couples, there is a sense of urgency, said Mary Bonauto, a lawyer with Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders. "In the end, this is a case about real people with real families," she said. They routinely face discrimination, from being barred from their partners' hospital rooms to losing out on their partners' pensions, Bonauto said.

"I want the same things that my brothers and sisters-in-law have," said another of the plaintiffs, John Anderson, 61, who lives in Woodbridge with Garrett Stack, his partner of 24 years.

The lawsuit, filed in Superior Court in New Haven, claims that the state's marriage laws violate the equal protection and due process provisions of the state constitution.

The state Department of Public Health, which oversees the issuance of marriage licenses, its commissioner, J. Robert Galvin, and Madison Town Clerk Dorothy Bean are named as defendants. "It's not her fault," Bonauto said. "She's only a defendant because she had to deny these couples."

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal will defend the state. "Several statutes and court decisions indicate clearly that the General Assembly has authorized a marriage relationship only between a man and a woman," he said in a statement. "These laws, like any duly enacted state statutes, are entitled to a presumption of constitutionality."

The lawsuit could take several years as the Massachusetts case did, but the couples say they are ready for the chance to make history.

"To be able to get married and have it mean something," said Jody Mock, who is 50 and lives in West Hartford with Beth Kerrigan, her partner of a decade, and their 2-year-old twins. " ... That's why we got involved."

Ads by Google

[Support Same-Sex Marriage](#)

Lapel Pins & stickers that support gay marriage, pride & civil rights
www.RainbowPins.com

[Timberholm Inn - Stowe](#)

gay owned inn, nestled in the woods perfect for Civil Unions
www.timberholm.com

[Gay Marriage](#)

[SUPERVISOR](#)
UNITED PARCEL
SERVICE

[OPERATIONS MANAGER](#)
CITY OF NORWALK

[View All Top Jobs](#)
[Post A Job](#)