

Bay State clears path to same-sex rites for out-of-state couples: Repeals 1913 law that stood in the way

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Massachusetts lawmakers voted last month to repeal a 1913 law that had the effect of preventing out-of-state gay or lesbian couples from being married in the Bay State. Following the state Senate's previous voice-vote action, the state House of Representatives approved the measure by a 118-to-35 vote on July 29.

Democratic governor Deval L. Patrick, whose daughter has come out as a lesbian, quickly signed the measure into law. Patrick and others have noted that the old law dated to a time when some U.S. states barred interracial marriage.

The 1913 law, which was dusted off by former governor Mitt Romney when the state's highest court approved same-sex marriage in 2003, banned marriages in Massachusetts if those unions would be illegal in the couple's home state.

Kristian M. Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, said the House vote reaffirmed the need for a federal constitutional amendment that would limit marriage to the union of one man and one woman.

William G. Conley of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus said his organization was thrilled with the vote: "This is good news for the state." Conley said the state may see an influx of marriage-bound gay couples from New York. That state's governor in May directed state agencies to recognize gay marriages legally performed in other states.

In mid-June, county clerks and other local officials in California began marrying same-sex couples, including some from other states. The California Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage faces possible repeal by an initiative on the November 4 ballot. -*Religion News Service*