

Connecticut OKs gay civil unions: First state to legalize without court order

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Connecticut has become the first state to legalize same-sex unions without being forced to do so by a court. Only an hour after the Connecticut Senate gave final approval to a bill April 20, Republican Governor Jodi Rell signed into law the legal provisions giving gays the same benefits and responsibilities as marriage.

Similar to another bill passed previously by the legislative body, the new one included an amendment tacked on in the state House of Representatives assuring that the term “marriage” would be reserved for heterosexual unions.

Vermont lawmakers approved civil unions in 2000 after a state court told them the Vermont Constitution requires it. And last year, Massachusetts began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples after a ruling by that state’s highest court.