



Published: 04.11.2008

Voters may revisit same-sex marriage

By Howard Fischer

CAPITOL MEDIA SERVICES

PHOENIX — State lawmakers are going to get another chance to decide whether voters should have another chance to ban gay marriage.

On a 6-4 vote, the House Judiciary Committee voted Thursday to constitutionally define marriage in Arizona as being solely between one man and one woman. SCR 1042 now goes to the full House.

House lawmakers approved the bill a week earlier, but not before Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Phoenix, tacked on an amendment to guarantee certain rights to unmarried couples living together, whether gay or straight, like inheritance and hospital visitation.

That made the now-amended measure unacceptable to those who simply want to ban same-sex weddings, and the bill was shelved.

Sinema still has the opportunity to try to amend this new version when it comes to the House floor next week. But foes of what she wants to do said some of their supporters, who were absent for last week's vote, will be available to defeat the change this time.

If the House passes the measure it still needs Senate approval and, ultimately, ratification by voters in November.

Voters rejected a similar measure in 2006.

But Cathi Herrod, president of the Center for Arizona Policy, which opposes gay marriage, said she believes that was because it also would have barred the Legislature and courts from permitting civil unions and prohibited government agencies from extending health care and other benefits to the domestic partners of public employees.

This measure deals only with gay marriage.

Polls taken before the 2006 election showed most Arizonans do not believe in state-recognized same-sex marriages. But they also showed that most Arizonans were unwilling to constitutionally bar any type of recognition or benefit to unmarried couples.

All content copyright © 1999-2008 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.