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Texas leaders plan for same-sex marriage fight after ruling



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AUSTIN (KXAN) — As the U.S. Supreme Court issues its decision to strike down bans on same-sex marriage, some Texas lawmakers are already looking to possibly tweak the state's current laws that have previously prevented such unions.

“Leading up to the next legislative session, Texas lawmakers should identify any statutes that need to be changed in the wake of today’s decision,” said Rep. Donna Howard, D-Austin, who supports same-sex marriage. “I will request that Speaker Straus include that task among his interim charges.”

Lawmakers often study issues between legislative sessions to help craft future legislation. Howard said she hopes the legislature would specifically focus on removing language from the state’s constitution related to marriage being between only a man and a woman, in addition to

examining other statutes.

“We still have things on the books in regard to homosexual behavior, which is still on the books as unlawful,” she said. “Clearly, that needs to be addressed and changed. There’s probably a lot of things there, and that’s why we need to have this review.”

As Howard asks Speaker Joe Straus, R-San Antonio, to take up the topic, the leader of the upper chamber might be considering a similar approach – with a different goal before the 2017 session.

This week, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, R-Texas, requested an opinion from Attorney General Ken Paxton’s office, regarding the rights of government officials involved with issuing same-sex marriage licenses and conducting same-sex wedding ceremonies.

“If the Supreme Court declares a constitutional right to same-sex marriage, can a county clerk or his or her employees refuse to issue a same-sex marriage license if doing so would violate their sincerely held religious beliefs on marriage?” Patrick asked. “Lastly, could a justice of the peace or a judge refuse to conduct a same-sex wedding ceremony if doing so would violate their sincerely held religious beliefs on marriage.”

In anticipation of the ruling, Paxton warned county clerks this week to use caution before handing out marriage licenses to same-sex couples. He reminded officials that Texas law defines marriage as between a man and a woman.

On Friday, Paxton issued a statement, saying: “Consistent with existing federal and state Religious Freedom Restoration Acts that should already protect religious liberty and prevent discrimination based on religion, we must work to ensure that the guarantees of the First Amendment, protecting freedom of religion, and its corollary freedom of conscience, are secure for all Americans.”

Paxton specifically mentioned his concern about discrimination against “people of faith in the distribution of grants, licenses, certification or accreditation.” He further expressed the need to prevent “harassing lawsuits against people of faith, their business and religious organizations,” in addition to protecting religious adoption and foster care organizations and the children and families they serve.

“Shortly, my office will be addressing questions about the religious liberties of clerks of court and justices of the peace,” Paxton continued.

Gov. Greg Abbott, R-Texas, also issued a memo Friday directing state agencies to protect religious liberties and First Amendment rights.

“The government must never pressure a person to abandon or violate his or her sincerely held religious beliefs regarding a topic such as marriage,” Abbott said. “That sort of religious coercion will never be a ‘compelling governmental interest,’ and it will never be ‘the least restrictive means of furthering that interest.’”

He said the order “applies to any decision, including but not limited to granting or denying benefits, managing agency employees, entering or enforcing agency contracts, licensing and permitting decisions, or enforcing state laws and regulations.”

While Abbott pushes for protection of religious freedom, he also criticized the “personal views” of the five justices who voted in favor of the ruling. In a campaign email to supporters on Friday, Abbott asked for donations in light of the decision.

“Marriage was defined by God. No man can redefine it,” Abbott said in an email. “If you agree, I ask that you make a contribution to my campaign today.”

In the email, Abbott further vowed to fight for greater protections like the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Pastor Protection Act.

This month, Abbott signed a bill – the so-called Pastor Protection Act – into law. In effect Sept. 1, it allows clergy members to refuse to conduct marriages that violate their beliefs.

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Austin_Colab · a day ago

No surprise. Bigots gonna bigot.

11 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share >



Mark Syman → Austin_Colab · 5 hours ago

The goal of homosexual activists is the end of marriage for all.

Lesbian political activist Marsha Gessen says:

"the institution of marriage should not exist" ... " (big applause from audience)... "fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do to marriage when we get there. Because we lie that the institution is not going to change and that is a lie, the institution of marriage is going to change and it should change and again I don't think it should exist."

"Part of the message on the pro gay marriage side is that don't worry, marriage will stay exactly the same as it is. Just the gays and lesbians will have access to it "

exactly the same as it is, just the gays and lesbians will have access to it.

Other voice says "that's never going to happen is it" (all laugh together)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?...>

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



I'm Still in Charge.. • a day ago

Why would a straight person even care about what gays are doing behind closed doors anyway??

Envy in the closet still?

8 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Austin_Colab → I'm Still in Charge.. • a day ago

And how does someone else getting married impede their ability to practice their religion? Silliness! As if xtians invented marriage. LOL

8 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



I'm Still in Charge.. → Austin_Colab • a day ago

Bingo!

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Mark Syman → Austin_Colab • 5 hours ago

For your convenience some webpages answer your question:

<http://tinyurl.com/o87qmmh>

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Gideon Waxfarb → Austin_Colab • a day ago

I don't think many commenters here quite understand just how morally reprehensible these people consider gay marriage to be. To put it in perspective, it ranks right up there with man/boy love in their eyes. So, think about that before you ask, 'so you have to hand out a marriage license to a gay couple - what's the big deal?'

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Steph Goettge • a day ago

If you're a gov't official (judge, clerk, etc) you should be checking your religion at the damn door. If you refuse a license, refuse a marriage because RELIGION, you're no longer able to do your job properly. Please quit immediately or be held in contempt. Assholes.

9 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



flapjack89 • a day ago

Texas is being dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century... AGAIN!

When will they learn? Oh right, after the idiot voters finally learn to stop electing these bigots.

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



YouDontKnowMe • a day ago

The way I see it, people are able to choose where they work. If you work for the government, you must abide the government's law. This has nothing to do with "Freedom of Religion" when you choose to work in a government office. If you can't suck it up and sign those papers, go find a job that suits you and your religion more appropriately. No one's telling you you can't go to worship or pray or believe in your higher power. They're telling you to do your job.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



RK → YouDontKnowMe • 12 hours ago

Exactly, when Texas joined the Union then they agreed to follow the FEDERAL government. Texas needs to remember this again and stop wasting tax payers money on a fight they just lost in the Supreme Court.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



imbok • a day ago

Somebody needs to tell Abbott that his opinion in this case is fundamentally irrelevant. The bus has left the station and the toothpaste is out of the tube.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Deb Nyberg • a day ago

The Texas elected, represent ALL Texans, not just the Texans they want to represent. If you are a government employee, you are paid your salary with tax dollars, from ALL Texans. When you get off work, do what you wish but on the job, follow the law to the letter.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



outofstep • a day ago

Sorry folks but because of joyful activists that can't wait to bombard private citizens and selectively chosen churches with their freshly filled out license, demanding a service or services knowing full well is is against the beliefs, there is a collision coming. Between a stretched and legally twisted opinion, and religious freedom which is specifically listed in the first ammendment. And everyone knows such actions are already in the works and the collision is now on the fast track.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



RK → outofstep • 12 hours ago

If you're implying that gays will start suing the church for their refusal to marry the couple then think again, Catholics have always been selective on who they marry and the bishops have always had the right to say no. Please show me statistics of Catholics suing the church because the bishop denied their wedding.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



outofstep → RK · 6 hours ago

It is not all, it is the militant few that already know who, when and where they plan to strike. The ones that demand tolerance while themselves being rigid to the point of hating anything place or one that doesn't go skipping lock step with them through the fields.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



atx_katiedid · a day ago

Of course they are! This didn't even need to be a news story.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



DementedOne · a day ago

And each Texas leader should be hung for treason for trying to violate peoples constitutional rights.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



luchia → DementedOne · a day ago

Dumb comment, demented.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Beki → DementedOne · a day ago

Violating someone's constitutional rights is not a death penalty offense. It should and eventually will result in contempt of court and jail time if the violations persist.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Anna · a day ago

"Marriage was defined by God" This made me LOL

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



trialofbeliefs · a day ago

If one is comfortable in their own skin and their own sexuality then one would have no reason to worry about how others are equally comfortable in the own skin and sexuality

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



JorgeGeorge Paez · a day ago

I thought in the beginning of the "Book" period GOD defined marriage as between a man and several women.

Somebody altered that! What's one more alteration?

Here come all the frivolous lawsuits. They are going to try to limit this like they limit (make impossible to get) abortions, which are LEGAL. Meanwhile Abbott signs laws guaranteeing Texas residents get to choke and die on cracking pollution and a city CAN'T pass a local ordinance to protect themselves!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



jeff meyer · a day ago

would ALL religious fanatics (of ALL ilk), just crawl in a hole in the ground and go away, the rest of the world would be a far better place without you

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brian4000 · a day ago

Texas is the absolute worst state in the country. Not only is it dangerously infatuated with secession, it is just a nightmare of a place culturally, where the language of liberty is used to justify religious oppression.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Beki → Brian4000 · a day ago

You are welcome to leave anytime. I believe Texas is a wonderful place to live, even though some of its politicians and citizens are ass-backwards in their thinking. Its people are highly educated (on average) and the state has a unique history and culture. Texas WILL come around...the leadership may need to change for that to happen though...

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brian4000 → Beki · a day ago

I don't live there. Have no desire to go there. Texas' leaders are democratically elected so that you guys keep electing bigoted leaders who embrace a fascist view of religion reflects on the General population. I don't care how educated they are there. This isn't about how many college degrees the people have, it is about the ugliness in their hearts.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Beki → Brian4000 · a day ago

Sounds as if we won't miss you...and there's no ugliness in my heart on this issue.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brian4000 → Beki · a day ago

I can't see your heart. If you believe that gay people have the right to marry, then yes there is no ugliness in your heart. If you agree with your governor, than like him there is great ugliness in your heart.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



bbq_fetus → Brian4000 · a day ago

hurry up and leave then.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brian4000 → bbq_fetus · a day ago



I wouldn't live there for all the money in the world. I am just trying to show how the rest of the country views the place. As far as I'm concerned if Texas doesn't want to abide by the ruling, it is free to go. Let's see how well you do being an isolated backwards country wedged in between the US and Mexico.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Beki → Brian4000 • a day ago

Amazing that you are so arrogant as to feel entitled and qualified to speak for the rest of the country on their views of Texas. My family and friends across the country would be surprised at your statements about their beliefs. Please stay away...

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Brian4000 → Beki • a day ago

Sure, not everyone in the states is of one mind. But it isn't arrogant to call our blatant bigotry and religious fascism nor is Texas terribly popular outside its own borders.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Beki → Brian4000 • a day ago

I believe that SCOTUS got it right today and I have no problems with anyone pointing out blatant bigotry and religious fascism - I've spent much of today blasting our governor and lieutenant governor for their public response to the rulings of SCOTUS over the past couple of days. I am ashamed of their behavior and their claims that they speak for me. I recommend that you speak your truth and make no claims to speak for others (you said that you were trying show how the rest of the country views Texas - YOU DON'T KNOW HOW THE REST OF THE COUNTRY VIEWS TEXAS). You have your limited view and for whatever reason you're trying to convince everyone that your view is the correct one. It weakens your arguments because you're spreading your own prejudice instead of just stating the argument.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Brian4000 → Beki • a day ago

And just one final note: back in the 1960s people in Mississippi were making the same point you are here. Doesn't change the fact that it was a backwards place filled with bigotry.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Brian4000 → Beki • a day ago

There isn't my truth or your truth. There is just the truth. And the truth here is, despite there being some few good apples like yourself, Texas is buy and large a state that elects ultra right nut jobs to leadership who have an

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and large a state that elects ultra right nut jobs to leadership who have an infatuation with secession, guns and religious extremism. If you want the general perception of Texas to change, then Texas needs to change who it elects. For now I won't be spending any time in a state like that. It is okay to pass judgment on those who engage in religious bigotry and violence.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Beki → Brian4000 • 10 hours ago

It's amazing that you believe that you know "the truth". Simply amazing...and, as I said in a earlier post, quite arrogant. You know nothing, Brian4000...nothing.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Galactic Melt • a day ago

Now Horselips can marry his boyfriend. This is a great day!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Javier Stoltz → Galactic Melt • a day ago

I'm pretty sure Horselips is female.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



JimmyConQueso → Galactic Melt • a day ago

I fought for our country. Why do you care what I do behind close doors? Who are you to judge me? You need me when you don't have the guts to defend this great country. I know you wish you could be me.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

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