

# LAW & JUSTICE

## Washington Debates Gay Marriage

### Lawmaker claims enough votes for passage

(AP) — As Washington state lawmakers held their first public hearing on gay marriage Monday, a Democratic senator announced her support for the measure, all but ensuring that Washington will become the seventh state to legalize same-sex marriage.

The announcement by Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, D-Camano Island, that she would cast the 25th and deciding vote in favor of the issue came as hundreds of people filled the Capitol to advocate for and against gay marriage.

"I know this announcement makes me the so-called 25th vote, the vote that ensures passage," Haugen said in a statement. She said she took her time making up her mind to "reconcile my religious beliefs with my beliefs as an American, as a legislator, and as a wife and mother who cannot deny to others the joys and benefits I enjoy. This is the right vote, and it is the vote I will cast when this measure comes to the floor."

The state House is widely expected to have enough support to pass gay marriage, and Gov. Chris



A supporter of gay marriage hands out stickers outside an overflow room for a Senate committee hearing Monday in Olympia on proposed legislation that would legalize same-sex marriage in the state of Washington. (AP photo)

Gregoire publicly endorsed the proposal earlier this month. However, opponents have already said they would challenge any new law with a public referendum.

Opponents and supporters

packed a Senate committee hearing for the first public hearing of the most high-profile issue before the Legislature this session. The Senate set up three overflow areas for the public, including the public gal-

lery on the Senate floor.

Gay marriage foes wore buttons that said "Marriage. One Man. One Woman." Others wore stickers that read "Washington United for Marriage," a group that announced in

November that it was forming a coalition to support same-sex marriage legislation.

Democratic Sen. Ed Murray, a gay lawmaker from Seattle who has led the push for gay civil rights and domestic partnerships, testified before the Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections Committee with his longtime partner, Michael Shiosaki.

"I have waited 17-years to ask this body to consider marriage equality for gay and lesbian families," said Murray, who is sponsoring the Senate bill. "I realize the issue of marriage for our families is emotional and divisive. It touches what each of us holds most dear, our families."

Others argued that the measure goes against traditional marriage and the Bible.

"You are saying as a committee and a Legislature that you know better than God," said Ken Hutcherson, pastor of Antioch Bible Church.

Washington would join New York, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and the District of Columbia in legalizing gay marriage. The state has had a domestic partnership law since 2007, and an "everything but marriage" law since 2009.

## Mayor Supports 'Freedom to Marry'

Portland Mayor Sam Adams joined over 70 mayors in the nation's capital Friday for the launch of the bipartisan Mayors for the Freedom to Marry, a campaign to ensure that all loving, committed couples, including gay and lesbian couples, are able to share in marriage.

Adams was in Washington, D.C. to participate in the U.S. Conference of Mayors winter meeting. He joined mayors from cities, large and small, with diverse geographic, ethnic and political backgrounds, who have a common goal: to secure the freedom to marry and uphold equal rights for all citizens.

"Portland is the home to many



Mayor Sam Adams

loving gay and lesbian couples who are in committed, long-term relationships and contribute to our communities. As mayor, I've married many people, and I look forward to the day when Portland's mayor can marry couples no matter their gender," Adams said.

"Cities that celebrate and cultivate diversity are the places where creative people and ideas can thrive. They are the places where today's entrepreneurs are most likely to build the businesses of tomorrow. Allowing same-sex couples to marry enhances our ability to build this kind of environment, which is good for all of us," Adams said.

## Beaverton Human Rights Award

A group providing low-cost adult English as a Second Language, literacy and citizenship classes has been recognized for its pursuit of equality, cultural diversity and advocacy of basic civil and human rights.

The Beaverton Literacy Council is Beaverton's 2011 Human Rights

Award winner, as named by the Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Commission and presented to the Beaverton City Council last week.

"Beaverton is home to many residents who tirelessly work towards making this community a better place to live, work and play," said Mayor

Denny Doyle. "This award celebrates their efforts and encourages cultural understanding throughout the entire community."

The Beaverton Literacy Council has been providing community services for more than 40 years. The group currently has nearly 40 volunteers, and served more than 160 students from 29 nations last year.

**in diversity Print**

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**Week in Review**

**Interfaith Dialogue**  
A 20-year-old tradition of interfaith dialogue that has become a vital part of the community's fabric is set to continue in Beaverton. The annual event, which has been held since 1992, brings together representatives from various faith communities to share their beliefs and experiences. This year's event will feature speakers from the Beaverton Literacy Council, the Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Commission, and the Beaverton City Council.

**Election Ballots On Way**

People of color find a political fit

Beaverton's 2011 Human Rights Award winner, the Beaverton Literacy Council, is set to receive the award at a ceremony on October 13, 2011. The award recognizes the council's commitment to providing low-cost adult English as a Second Language, literacy and citizenship classes to the community.

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