

# Kennebec Journal

## National foes of same-sex marriage look to 2010

The National Organization for Marriage plans to target legislators who supported the defeated law.

By SUSAN M. COVER, December 9, 2009

AUGUSTA — A national group that supports traditional marriage plans to get involved in Maine's 2010 elections.

The National Organization for Marriage, the primary financial backer of the campaign that overturned the state's same-sex marriage law last month, plans to run ads to let voters know which legislators supported the law.

"The state Legislature in Maine sets public policy, and there are many people in Maine concerned about the preservation of traditional marriage," said James Bopp, a lawyer for the National Organization for Marriage.

Although the law was passed by the House and Senate and signed by Gov. John Baldacci in May, it was overturned in a people's veto effort, with 53 percent supporting repeal.

Bopp filed an amended complaint in U.S. District Court last week to object to laws that would require the National Organization for Marriage to file as a political action committee if it spends money on candidate races. The group previously filed a federal lawsuit challenging the state's laws for ballot questions.

Attached to the court filing is a "broadcast communication" that Bopp described as an example of the types of ads the National Organization for Marriage could run before the June primaries and November's general election.

The script says in part:

"Candidate X helped push same-sex marriage through the Maine legislature and refused to give voters a say.

"During the campaign, Candidate X slammed supporters of traditional marriage.

"Call Candidate X and tell him/her to respect the decision of voters. Let him/her know it's wrong to accept money from special interest groups backing same-sex marriage and that it's time to stop pushing to redefine marriage in Maine."

A separate filing attached to the lawsuit shows a sample mailer that thanks any candidate who "fought to stop gay marriage in the Legislature and then was an outspoken supporter of Question 1 to repeal the gay marriage law."

Betsy Smith, executive director of EqualityMaine, said she doesn't think Maine voters will like being told by an out-of-state group whom they should vote for in legislative races.

"I think they have a lot of gumption," she said. "What strikes me is, a national organization is now going to spend resources in Maine to tell voters how to pick legislators."

EqualityMaine, based in Portland, has endorsed candidates for 25 years and will continue to work on behalf of those who support same-sex marriage, she said.

Smith said the 8,000 volunteers who worked on the No on 1 campaign will actively work to elect legislators who support marriage equality.

Rep. Ben Pratt, D-Eddington, may see some of the National Organization for Marriage ads in his district. He supported same-sex marriage in the Legislature but his district voted decisively against it in November.

"My constituents are not single-issue people," he said. "They realize it's a topic people disagree on, and can live with that."

Bopp said the National Organization for Marriage, which is fighting gay-marriage bills across the country, will continue to be involved in Maine, especially since supporters of same-sex marriage say they will push once again to change the definition.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom," Bopp said, paraphrasing Thomas Jefferson.

All 186 legislative seats are up for election next year, and Maine also will choose a new governor.

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