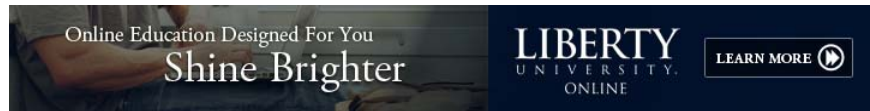


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Lawsuit Filed in Arizona Challenges Gay Marriage Ban

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Supreme Court Halts Gay Marriage in Utah Pending State Appeal

BY KATHERINE WEBER, CHRISTIAN POST REPORTER

January 8, 2014 | 9:56 am

Four couples in Arizona filed a class action lawsuit against the state this week, challenging its constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. The arguments employed in the lawsuit reportedly reflect the lawsuit that ultimately overturned Utah's ban on same-sex marriage.

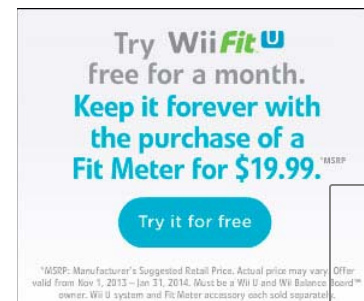
"We are asking for relief on behalf of all married and unmarried same-sex couples in Arizona," attorney Shawn Aiken, who is representing the four same-sex couples in the lawsuit, said in a [statement](#). "Now is the time to take up this issue."

The lawsuit reportedly argues that the Supreme Court's June ruling, which struck down a key provision of the Defense of Marriage Act and thus awarded some federal benefits to same-sex couples, should be reason for Arizona to legalize same-sex marriage. The rationale behind this argument is that same-sex couples receiving federal benefits should also have their union recognized by individual states.

"We're saying, 'Look, follow that rationale and make the same declaration as to the law in Arizona,'" Aiken said, according to the [Arizona Republic](#). "It's that simple."

Those being represented in the recent Arizona lawsuit include Joseph Connolly and Terrel Pochert from Pinal County, Suzanne Cummins and Holly Mitchell of Maricopa County, Clark Rowley and David Chaney of Maricopa County, and Mason Hite and Christopher Devine, also of Maricopa County.

The lawsuit comes weeks after, in a surprise ruling, U.S. District Judge Robert J. Shelby overturned Utah's 2004 ban on same-sex marriage, saying it was unconstitutional based on the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment rights to Equal Protection and Due Process. Since his ruling, over 1,000 same-sex couples in the conservative state have received marriage licenses from their local county clerk. On Monday, Jan. 6, however, the U.S. Supreme Court [granted](#) Utah a stay in the issuing of same-sex marriage licenses as the state challenges Shelby's ruling in the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. It is unclear what will happen to the licenses already issued to same-sex couples in Utah.



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Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, a group that opposes same-sex marriage, [said](#) in a statement following the Supreme Court's decision Monday that "the decision by a single federal judge to redefine marriage in Utah is lawless, and we are pleased that the Supreme Court has put this decision on hold to allow the state to appeal it in an orderly fashion."

According to the Arizona Republic, the most recent Arizona case is one of 25 filed in 16 states challenging state law that bans same-sex marriage. Arizona's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage was rejected by voters in 2006, but then approved by voters in 2008 under the name Proposition 102.

Cathi Herrod, president of the pro-traditional marriage advocacy group Center for Arizona Policy, told the Arizona Republic that she hopes the most recent lawsuit filed in Arizona will not succeed in overturning the will of Arizona voters. "We would hope the courts would defer to the Arizona voters that clearly defined marriage as only being between one man and one woman."

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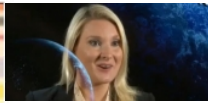
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The 'Four Corners' region of the Southwest could soon become known as the 'Four Corners of Equality'. On Monday New Mexico GOP Governor Susana Martinez said she won't support or seek an amendment to ban gay marriage in the state, saying the issue is settled. When asked specifically about NM GOP Sen. Bill Sharer's [...more](#)

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[Agree\(10\)](#) [Disagree\(2\)](#) [Report abuse\(0\)](#)**charleshurstauthor** 7:24 PM on January 08, 2014[FOLLOW](#) [MUTE](#)

They shouldn't have allowed gay marriage in any state. We have stepped off the precipice of the sane. Utah or Arizona or even the nutcase California. It is the epitome of anti reason These are the comments I will get back. "it is the new normal." "They have the right" "Homosexuality is normal too" First, the [...more](#)

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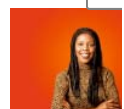
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DaleRichner 7:30 PM on January 08, 2014

8 FOLLOWERS MUTE

charleshurstauthor - Are you quite finished? Meanwhile, back on planet reality, leading national institutions whose professional findings for decades now consistently conclude that there is nothing wrong or bad about being gay include the: American Medical Association American Psychological Association American ...[more](#)

REPLY

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jennyleroy 2:21 AM on January 09, 2014

6 FOLLOWERS MUTE

charleshurstauthor - Talking about ideology...So you are among these people who don't want any control on any weapon. And you have the guts to whine upon the Newtown and Colorado killings? You are the most immoral of all, and like the ones who sadly voted for that in Congress, the worst murderer.

REPLY

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AndrewWA 10:20 AM on January 09, 2014

31 FOLLOWERS MUTE

charleshurstauthor - my state voted on it and it was passed. Are you arguing against the "will of the people"? Happily married gay man here! :-)

REPLY

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oneironaut 11:16 PM on January 10, 2014

3 FOLLOWERS MUTE

charleshurstauthor - Massachusetts, where SSM has been legal the longest in this country, has not fallen off any precipice. There is still religious freedom, more than before, since religions that accept SSM can have such unions recognized by the state. Marriage between heterosexuals is still alive and well. No one ...[more](#)

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JamesRAist 6:32 PM on January 08, 2014

36 FOLLOWERS MUTE

The only things that gay couples have in common are the temptation to homosexual sin and the practice of homosexual sins. The government has no valid interest in codifying sins of any nature. Our culture may refer to homosexual unions as "marriage", but God still calls them sin. Merely calling it marriage doesn't make it marriage, any more than hanging out in a garage makes you a car! To read more, "google" rethinkingtheology/2012/07/18/gay-marriage-did-god-change-his-mind/

REPLY

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DaleRichner 7:34 PM on January 08, 2014

8 FOLLOWERS MUTE

JamesRAist - Are you confusing legal marriage with holy matrimony in your particular church again? I think people have explained to you several times how they're not the same thing. Now that it's being challenged by gay people who want to marry, to continue the status quo the government must show that a legitimate ...[more](#)

REPLY

Agree(8) Disagree(3) Report abuse(0)



AndrewWA 10:21 AM on January 09, 2014

31 FOLLOWERS MUTE

JamesRAist - please James, it does get better. You can come out now...

REPLY

Agree(2) Disagree(1) Report abuse(0)



CalebELCA 5:42 PM on January 08, 2014

2 FOLLOWERS MUTE

Good for Arizona! Us Californians are right behind you! It's only right that the first amendment belongs to everyone including those religions and denominations that perform same-sex unions or marriages including the ELCA, PCUSA, TEC, UCC, Disciples, Reformed/Conservative Judaism, Unitarian, and even the UMC Conference of Arizona voted for same-sex marriage.

REPLY

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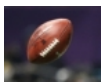
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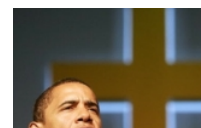
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