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Tucson couple joins federal lawsuit to overturn Ariz. gay marriage ban

TUCSON - A local couple has joined a federal lawsuit that challenges Arizona's ban on same-sex marriage.

Peter Bramley and Jeff Ferst are joining six other Arizona couples to try and overturn the state's voter-approved law.

Back in 2008, more than 56 percent of Arizona voters approved a change to the state constitution, defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Bramley and Ferst were married in California last October, but now want Arizona to acknowledge it.

"We wanted our marriage to be recognized the same as any other marriage is," Ferst said.

The two joined the lawsuit in hopes of overturning Arizona's constitution, which prevents them from enjoying the many benefits of marriage.

While Bramley and Ferst can file federal taxes jointly, things are different on the state level.

"But in Arizona we're going to have to file separately as if we're not married and we'll lose that benefit in Arizona," Bramley told News 4 Tucson.

However, the Center for Arizona Policy, which was the driving force in getting the law approved by a majority of voters, stands by its convictions.

"Society benefits marriage because marriage benefits society," said Aaron Baer, a spokesman for the Center for Arizona Policy.

"For someone to try to go to the courts and undermine a majority of Arizonans, it's really the wrong way to have this discussion. It would be absolutely wrong for one judge to silent the votes of so many people," he said.

Still, Bramley and Ferst are prepared for a long fight ahead of them.

"We certainly feel like second class citizens, not having the same rights as our straight brothers and sisters," Bramley said.

The initial lawsuit was filed in January. It is unclear how long it will take to get through the courts.



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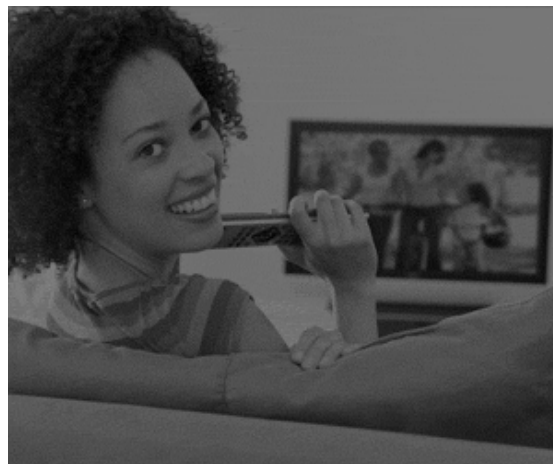


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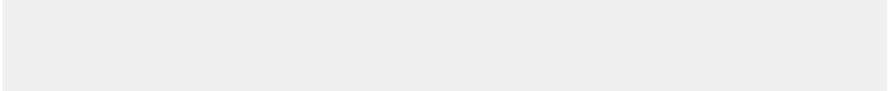
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