

First-ever same-sex wedding in Washington – 10.03.2010

In the socially conservative capital of the United States an old mould was shattered on 9.3.2010 as Washington DC bore witness to the first-ever same-sex wedding within its borders.

Under the district's new same-sex marriage law, which received official sanction from a Supreme Court decision last week, lesbian couple Angelisa Young and Sinjoyla Townsend tied the knot at the headquarters of the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBT lobby group.

The approval given to the same-sex marriage law by the city council was immediately challenged by a lawsuit contending that residents had a right to vote on the law as well.

Local courts as well as U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts rejected the appeals, allowing the District of Columbia to join other same-sex-marriage-supporting states such as Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

“This argument has some force,” Justice Roberts wrote, regarding the case.

“However, I conclude that a stay is not warranted. ... It has been the practice of the court to defer to the decisions of the courts of the District of Columbia on matters of exclusively local concerns.”

Following the rejection of the appeal, the Superior Court of DC Marriage Bureau posted an understated note that read: “NOTE: Pursuant to the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009, A18-248, effective March 3, 2010, same sex couples may apply for marriage licences in the District of Columbia.” The law still demands a waiting period of three business days before marriage licences can be issued.

Speaking to ABC News, Ms. Young earlier said, “We feel gratitude that we are being included. We have the legal right to love each other and to provide. I think everyone can understand that.”

According to the White House, President Barack Obama “supports full civil unions and federal rights for LGBT couples and opposes a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage.”

Further, the President supports the repeal of the “Don't Ask Don't Tell” policy in the armed forces “in a sensible way” and believes in ensuring adoption rights for all couples and individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, the White House adds.



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