

# North Carolina approves ban on same-sex marriage

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May 9, 2012

c. 2012 Religion News Service WILMINGTON, N.C. (RNS) The sign outside the polling station at Devon Park United Methodist Church exemplified this state's struggle with a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

"A true marriage is male and female and God," the church marquee read. All around the church sign were small campaign signs that read: "Vote Against Constitutional Amendment" and "Amendment One Harms Children Vote Against."

The amendment was approved Tuesday (May 8) by 61 percent of voters, with some counties endorsing it with more than 80 percent of the vote. Only seven counties voted against it.

"In some sense North Carolinians are voting against their own beliefs," according to the Raleigh-based Public Policy Polling firm said. "Fifty-three percent of voters in the state support either gay marriage or civil unions, yet a majority also support the amendment that would ban both."

North Carolina is one of a number of states grappling with the issue of gay marriage this year. Minnesota also has a marriage amendment planned for a vote in November, while Maryland and Washington state will consider moves to overturn legislative approval of same-sex marriage. President Obama on Wednesday came out in support of gay marriage after years of an "evolving" position.

Amendment One spurred 30-year-old Kim Boomhower, of Mebane, N.C., to vote for the first time in her life. She voted against it.

"Don't get me wrong, I still could care less about who's president, governor, commissioner of revenue, etc. But when I read the language of the proposed amendment, I was shocked to think that my daughter would have to live in a place where hatred, segregation and bigotry were written into our constitution," she said.

"What if my daughter loved someone who wasn't 'approved' by the state? What if she didn't want to get married? She and every other human being should have the right to love whomever they choose, without penalty or isolation."

On Wednesday, petitions were already circulating online throughout the state to repeal the amendment.

In the state's mountain west, associate pastor Luke Lunceford of Laurel Springs Baptist Church in Deep Gap said voting for the amendment "advanced the gospel based on our beliefs in the Bible."

"I found a lot of holes in the arguments against it," he said. "But I think churches that were outspoken for the amendment need to go out of their way to show love to the homosexual community because just because we voted for the amendment doesn't mean we don't love them."

At the First Assembly of God polling place in Wilmington, John and June Roberts voted for the amendment because "we believe traditional marriage helps create good role models for children. Otherwise, it's confusing to children."

Though University of North Carolina Wilmington student Sophia Lanza is an evangelical and believes in marriage between one woman and one man, she voted against the amendment.

"The Bible says you can't judge others. And women could be in danger because of this amendment," she said. "I care a lot about our country, and I just don't believe Jesus would want us to hold our righteousness above anyone else."

Wilmington resident Ben Murph said he checked the box for the amendment without a second thought.

"I'm 77 years old, and I think God created us for a purpose, that women should produce children and a man is there to be the head of the household," he said. "I don't believe in any woman marrying a woman."