



Michigan gay marriage ban struck down: See how Gov. Rick Snyder, other state leaders reacted

gay-marriage-deboer-rowse-ap.jpg

Jayne Rowse, left, speaks as April DeBoer, kisses her during a news conference in Ferndale, Mich., Friday, March 21, 2014. A federal judge has struck down Michigan's ban on gay marriage Friday the latest in a series of decisions overturning similar laws across the U.S. The two nurses who've been partners for eight years claimed the ban violated their rights under the U.S. Constitution. (AP Photo | Paul Sancya)

Jonathan Oosting | joosting@mlive.com By Jonathan Oosting | joosting@mlive.com

Follow on Twitter

on March 22, 2014 at 6:05 AM, updated March 22, 2014 at 6:16 AM

LANSING, MI -- A federal judge on Friday **struck down Michigan's ban on gay marriage**, prompting a series of enthusiastic celebrations and a variety of frustrated responses.

Same-sex marriage advocates hailed the ruling as a groundbreaking moment for equal rights, and praised plaintiffs April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse of Hazel Park, who initially filed the suit seeking to win joint custody of their adopted children.

Attorney General Bill Schuette quickly filed an emergency appeal, however, and Gov. Rick Snyder's office noted his responsibility to follow the Michigan Constitution, which voters chose to amend in 2004 by defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Read on for Friedman's conclusion and statements from Snyder's office, Schuette, a co-author of the marriage amendment and critics who championed its demise.

U.S. District Court Judge Bernard Friedman, a Reagan appointee, from his opinion: "In attempting to define this case as a challenge to 'the will of the people,' state defendants lost sight of what this case is truly about: people. No court record of this proceeding could ever fully convey the personal sacrifice of these two plaintiffs who seek to ensure that the state may no longer impair the rights of their children and the thousands of others now being raised by same-sex couples.

"It is the Court's fervent hope that these children will grow up 'to understand the integrity and closeness of their own family and its concord with other families in their community and in their daily lives.' Today's decision is a step in that direction, and affirms the enduring principle that regardless of whoever finds favor in the eyes of the most recent majority, the guarantee of equal protection must prevail."

Snyder spokesperson Sara Wurfel: "We respect the court's ruling and recognize that there are going to be appeals filed.

"The Governor's been clear in his support for adoptive families and in particular the work of DHS to strengthen children's services and matching kids in foster care with permanent families. Key, essential progress has been made.

"Michigan's statute and our state's Constitution are very clear on this matter. This was not about LGBT or adoption issues, but about obligation to defend the law and Constitution as people wrote or amended it, and the voter-initiated language in the Constitution clearly prohibits him from giving the benefits of marriage to a same sex couple. That's a responsibility he has to, and does, take seriously.

"If voters decided to change Michigan's provisions, or ultimately courts conclude the provision of the Michigan Constitution cannot be enforced, he'd respect those decisions and follow the rule of law. (The) Governor is going to remain focused on ensuring Michigan's continued comeback and quality of life for all Michiganders."

Mark Schauer, Democratic candidate for governor: "This is a major victory for loving, committed couples across the state. While I know there are differing views on this issue, I firmly believe every Michigander deserves equal protection under the law, and today's ruling reaffirms this fundamental American value.

"Michigan's marriage equality ban hurts our economy by making it harder to attract highly-skilled workers and entrepreneurs. It's time for Gov. Snyder and Attorney General Schuette to accept this ruling, and stop wasting Michigan taxpayer dollars on a costly appeal."

Schuette on appeal: "In 2004 the citizens of Michigan recognized that diversity in parenting is best for kids and families because moms and dads are not interchangeable. Michigan voters enshrined that decision in our State constitution, and their will should stand and be respected. I will continue to carry out my duty to protect and defend the Constitution."

Kary Moss, ACLU of Michigan: "Today's decision is a huge victory for the people of Michigan. The momentum toward LGBT equality is accelerating as yet another federal court finds that denying same-sex couples the fairness and dignity of marriage is unconstitutional. Public opinion has changed drastically since 2004 when voters amended the Michigan constitution to exclude same-sex couples from marriage. Today, across the political spectrum, Michiganders recognize that allowing same-sex couples to marry is a matter of fundamental freedoms, economic security, and family values."

Gary Glenn, GOP state House candidate and co-author of the "marriage protection amendment":
"One Detroit lawyer in a black robe doesn't have legitimate constitutional or moral authority to overturn either natural law or the vote of 2.7 million Michigan voters who placed the Marriage Protection Amendment

in our state constitution. This one political elitist put his own personal views above the will of the people, arrogantly ruling that all 2.7 million voters were 'irrational' in their common sense belief that the ideal environment for every child is having both a mother and a father committed to each other and to their children in marriage."

Senate Minority Leader Gretchen Whitmer, D-East Lansing: "Today's ruling is inspiring. It tells every person in Michigan that they have the right to share their love with whomever they choose without the government telling them it's somehow less legitimate than the love that others may have. That freedom to make our own decisions about our lives is the very core of our Constitution and I applaud Judge Friedman today for recognizing that. I know there are countless couples out there at this very moment making wedding plans and I wish them the same happiness, the same success and the same love that all wedded couples deserve on their wedding day. I couldn't be more thrilled than to be among the first to congratulate them on this great day."

Michigan Catholic Conference, statement from bishops: "Today's decision from federal district court Judge Bernard Friedman to redefine the institution of marriage by declaring Michigan's Marriage Amendment unconstitutional strikes at the very essence of family, community and human nature. In effect, this decision advances a misunderstanding of marriage, and mistakenly proposes that marriage is an emotional arrangement that can simply be redefined to accommodate the dictates of culture and the wants of adults. Judge Friedman's ruling that also finds unconstitutional the state's adoption law is equally of grave concern."

U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Flint: "Equality and love prevailed over injustice and hate today. I am overjoyed that Judge Friedman found Michigan's discriminatory ban on gay marriage unconstitutional and appropriately tossed it aside. With today's historic ruling, Michigan joins a growing number of other states in recognizing that everyone should be treated equally under the law, including the right to marry whom you love."

*Jonathan Oosting is a Capitol reporter for MLive Media Group. **Email him**, find him on **Google+** or follow him on **Twitter**.*

© 2014 MLive.com. All rights reserved.