



New Hampshire joins growing list of US states allowing gay unions

April 26, 2007

New Hampshire voted Thursday to approve civil unions for same-sex partners, joining a small but growing group of US states giving legal recognition to gay partnerships.

NEW YORK (AFP) - The bill, which passed in the northeastern state's senate by 14 votes to 10, gives gay couples the right to enter civil unions with the same rights, responsibilities, and obligations as married couples, a senate spokeswoman said.

The measure was due to be signed into law within the next five days, a spokeswoman for the governor's office added.

In 2000, New Hampshire's neighbor Vermont became the first US state to offer civil unions to gay couples.

Four years later, Massachusetts became what is still the only US state to recognize same-sex marriages.

Connecticut and Maine also offer some sort of civil union or domestic partnerships, but the issue continues to be a source of deep division in most other states, especially in more conservative areas.

"If you look at the national picture, we are seeing across the country more and more support for family recognition for gay and lesbian families," Roberta Sklar from the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce said after the vote.

"We highly commend the New Hampshire legislature," she added.