

North Carolina Voters Pass Gay Marriage Ban

by JESSICA JONES

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In North Carolina Tuesday, voters approved a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships. North Carolina becomes the 30th state to pass a measure outlawing same-sex marriage.

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STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

North Carolina has become the 30th state to approve a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. State law already prohibits same-sex marriage, but supporters of this amendment say they wanted extra protection. Jessica Jones reports from North Carolina Public Radio.

JESSICA JONES, BYLINE: The amendment's backers celebrated their success last night in a big hotel ballroom in Raleigh. North Carolina is the last Southern state to add a marriage amendment to its constitution. Kim Creech stood in the center of the room, helping to cut a seven-tier wedding cake.

KIM CREECH: I made the cake, and we're celebrating marriage by having a wedding cake. And that's what we're doing.

JONES: Creech herself is married to a Baptist minister who's a key member of Vote for Marriage NC, the main group supporting the amendment. State election officials say voter turnout overall was high, largely because of the measure. Creech calls it a great victory for the state.

CREECH: I am thankful because it's important to keep marriage as it is - between a man and a woman

JONES: The amendment would also deny legal recognition of civil unions and domestic partnerships. Interest groups, including the National Organization for Marriage and the Human Rights Campaign, have poured money into the state. Paul Guequierre is with the Coalition to Protect All North Carolina Families, the main group opposed to the amendment.

PAUL GUEQUIERRE: Well, this is certainly a temporary setback. The fight continues. The fight goes on. The coalition will look at all of the options before us, to see what the next steps will be - legal options, political options. We're looking at all options.

JONES: Guequierre thinks more time could have helped defeat the amendment. Polls show many voters didn't understand it also affects civil unions. While a majority of North Carolinians oppose gay marriage, a majority also support civil unions for gay and lesbian couples.

For NPR News, I'm Jessica Jones in Durham, North Carolina.

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