

Bermuda Appeals to London High Court to Uphold Gay Marriage Ban

Bermuda's government has filed an appeal to a London high court in an effort to enforce a law banning gay marriage in the British overseas territory and popular tourist destination, Reuters reported.



"Constitutional issues are important issues and this Government wants to get it right," the government said in a statement on Thursday.

The appeal to London's Privy Council, the highest court of appeal for British territories, comes just weeks after Bermuda's court of appeal upheld the right for same-sex couples to marry on November 23.

Same-sex marriage has been a polarizing issue in Bermuda for some time. Last year, the Supreme Court ruled that defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman discriminates against same-sex couples. The legislature fought the ruling and passed the Domestic Partnership Act eliminating the rights of same-sex couples but the Supreme Court

responded by tossing out the provisions of that act.

Tony Brannon, a gay rights activist in Bermuda, called the appeal "a cynical, bigoted, hypocritical attack on the rights and freedoms of others."

PinkNews.co.uk points out that the back-and-forth battle has even impacted the cruise industry in Bermuda, affecting wedding packages.

"Carnival Corporation believes our employees, guests and the public at large deserve equal dignity and respect," the cruise company said in a statement earlier this year.

"We applauded the May 2017 ruling in Bermuda's Supreme Court allowing and recognizing same-sex marriages on the island. The court decision allowed cruise companies to begin offering same-sex wedding packages. Beginning in summer of 2017, we began booking onboard wedding packages for same-sex couples. As a company committed to equality, inclusion and diversity, we were disheartened by Bermuda's subsequent reversal of the May 2017 ruling."

Citing court records, Reuters reported that appeals to the Privy Council are extremely rare, with only one or two cases from Bermuda brought each year.

Bermuda is the first country or territory to re-ban gay marriage after legalizing it. If same-sex marriage ultimately stands, the ruling is likely to set a precedent for other British territories.