



## California Makes History as Gay Marriages Begin

By [Kevin Wayne](#)

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San Francisco, CA - As of 5:01 p.m. Pacific Time on Monday, the State of California made history, becoming only the second state to allow gay and lesbian couples the legal right to marry.

Last month, the California Supreme Court struck down the states ban on same-sex marriage, paving the way for gay and lesbian couples to marry.

The ruling which began Monday evening requires officials to issue gender-neutral marriage licences but it does not require them to perform ceremonies.

At San Francisco City Hall, Mayor Gavin Newsom presided at the wedding of lesbian rights activists Del Martin, 87, and Phyllis Lyon, 84, as a cheering crowd of supporters gathered at the building's entrance.

"It's something that's been due a long time, so thank God it's finally here," Lyon told the press outside of City Hall. "Our love and lives together deserve celebrating. Although we have little need for more kitchen gadgets, we do believe a government acknowledgment of our fundamental constitutional rights is a fitting gift."

Gay marriage remains a divisive issue in U.S. politics including the upcoming presidential election. On this issue it appears both candidates positions are similar.

Republican Senator John McCain opposes the Federal Marriage Amendment, while supporting the rights of individual states to make their own laws on the issue. He opposed gay marriage but supports legal benefits for same-sex couples.

Democrat Senator Barack Obama favors civil unions, but stops short of supporting gay marriage.

Massachusetts is the only other state where gay marriage is legal.