

## Federal Judge Blocks Nebraska Gay Marriage Ban

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - A federal judge has blocked Nebraska's gay marriage ban, but the decision will not take effect until March 9.

U.S. District Judge Joseph Bataillon on Monday ordered the state to not enforce its ban.

Seven same-sex couples filed a lawsuit last year challenging the state's voter-backed ban. Last week, Bataillon heard arguments for and against a motion for an injunction to block enforcement of the ban while the lawsuit is pending.

The Nebraska Attorney General's office has said it will appeal any decision blocking or overturning the voter-approved ban on gay marriage.

The U.S. Supreme Court announced Jan. 17 that it would decide whether same-sex couples have a right to marry under the Constitution. A decision is expected by late June.

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts issued a statement following the ruling:

“Today, a judge took steps to overturn a constitutional amendment approved by 70% of Nebraskans that defines marriage as between one man and one woman,” said Governor Pete Ricketts. “The definition of marriage is an issue for the people of Nebraska, and an activist judge should not substitute his personal political preferences for the will of the people. I will continue to work with Attorney General Doug Peterson to uphold Nebraska’s Constitution and the will of the people of our great state.”