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CTV News

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Prayer vigils against gay marriage stoke debate

CTV.ca News Staff

Opponents to same-sex marriage held a national prayer vigil hoping to send a message to their federal MPs. The debate over the definition of marriage has been heating up across the

country.

"Same-sex marriage is completely opposed to God, his principles and why he formed man and woman," Jackie Bourque said, as she stood with a handful of protesters gathered on the steps of Justice Minister Martin Cauchon's Montreal office.

"He did not form Adam and Steve, but Adam and Eve."

A coalition of religious and family groups, who support the traditional definition of marriage, targeted at least 30 MPs who support gay marriage on Sunday.

"This, no doubt, will have a profound effect on the MPs and their ability to be re-elected," Charles McVety, one of the organizers, said in an interview from Toronto.

"People of faith are traditionally very reserved and not too active in the process of democracy. However, today a sleeping giant has been awakened."

In Halifax, more than 1,000 people attended a rally in Grand Parade square against same-sex marriage. The rally urged MPs not to change the definition of marriage, but a few same-sex marriage supporters turned out as well.

About 300 people gathered in front of Labour Minister Claudette Bradshaw's office in Moncton, New Brunswick. But only four people turned up for an afternoon rally at the riding office of Liberal leadership candidate Paul Martin.

A new SES-Research poll suggests most Canadians support same-sex marriage, but those

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who don't (60 per cent) will penalize MPs who vote in favour of changing the marriage laws.

The federal government has chosen not to appeal lower court decisions in Ontario and British Columbia that allow same-sex marriage. Cauchon said Ottawa's draft legislation on same-sex marriage respects equality rights and protection of religious beliefs.

Under the proposed law, same-sex unions would be legal, but churches would not be compelled to perform such services. The legislation will be submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada for review before it is put to a free vote in Parliament.

NDP Leader Jack Layton told CTV News that same-sex marriage is a question of equality and human rights. He recently attended a gay pride parade in Quebec City with Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe.

"From our standpoint (the NDP) it's a question of equality for all Canadians. Of course, religious freedoms will be protected so that churches will marry those they choose to marry. But in our society as a whole, civil marriages will be for everyone," Layton said.


Sunday's prayer vigils were co-ordinated through the website [Sanctityofmarriage.ca](#)

According to a declaration on the site, "The proposed legislation to redefine marriage represents an assault on common sense, an assault on the values of societies, and an assault on the liberties of men and women of good will.


"I pray that our member of Parliament will have the courage to vote against the proposed legislation and act in conformity with the law that is inscribed within human nature and which is not affected by every wind that blows."

With a file from The Canadian Press

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