

## Conn. passes same-sex marriage bill

*by UPI*

HARTFORD, Conn. -- Connecticut legislators approved a bill allowing for same-sex marriages after moving to exempt religious organizations, observers said.

The compromise enabled the legislation to pass both Connecticut's House of Representatives and Senate Wednesday night after a lengthy and often heated debate that explored themes of religious freedom, discrimination and the state's history of tolerance, The Hartford Courant reported.

A spokesman for Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell told reporters she would sign the measure, which codifies a landmark state Supreme Court ruling last year that opened the door to gay marriage in Connecticut.

The measure was vehemently opposed by the Roman Catholic Church and the Family Institute of Connecticut. Both insisted on including legal protections for religious organizations that find same-sex marriage to be morally objectionable. They also demanded a "conscientious objector" clause for business owners others who define homosexuality as a sin, the Courant said.

Observers said the law as written will exempt religious groups, but the exemption was not expanded to individuals, justices of the peace and businesses such as florists.

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