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House to begin Federal Marriage Amendment debate

Anti-gay amendment would be first in history to extend discrimination

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House Constitution subcommittee is preparing to hold hearings on legislation to amend the U.S. Constitution to block same-sex marriage. The announcement comes just one day after the parallel subcommittee in the Senate began its own hearings.

"The people and their elected representatives — and not a handful of rogue judges and officials — should have the right to make decisions regarding marriage policy," said House subcommittee chair Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH).

Chabot said the growing number of cities allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry has become an epidemic that must be stopped.

Standing beside James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) the powerful chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Chabot insisted that politics played no role in the announcement. It is a position strongly denounced by Democrats.

"The Constitution should not be used as a political tool by George W. Bush," declared Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), the Ranking Democrat on the subcommittee on the Constitution.

"The proposed amendment would, for the first time in our nation's history, change the Constitution to deny, rather than to expand,

the civil rights of a large number of Americans. Congress should reject the president's election year call to undermine this country's historic commitment to the guarantee of equal protection under the law for all Americans."

The first hearing on the Defense of Marriage Act will be Mar. 30.



President Bush has endorsed amending the Constitution to ban gay marriage. Democratic presidential contender Sen. John Kerry says he would extend all the rights, privileges and obligations of marriage on same-sex couples but not call it marriage.

This article previously appeared on 365gay.com.

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