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## Legislation passes S.C. House

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that they understood that she was not trying to harm them with this bill."

The anti-gay marriage and benefits bill now goes from the House to the Senate Judiciary Committee, where it will be considered alongside *Senate Bill 996*, the Senate version of the same bill. *Senate bill 387* and *House Bill 4920* prohibit unmarried couples, including gay and lesbian couples, from adopting or fostering children. That makes a total of four anti-gay bills currently before the S.C. senate or congress.

If the bill passes the senate, South Carolina will have the distinction of being one of only two states that prohibit same-sex partners from receiving family benefits for public employees in the state.

The only state that currently bans adoptions by lesbians and gays is Florida.

The action by South Carolina is part of a spate of anti-gay legislation that has cropped up across the country in response for the Texas Supreme Court's repeal of sodomy laws across the country and the current demand by LGBT folk nationwide for legally recognized same-sex marriage.

In **Alabama** a constitutional amendment is awaiting action in the House of Representatives. Most lawmakers support the amendment, but some Democrats want to delay putting it on the ballot until 2006, fearing a referendum in November would help Republicans by drawing more

conservatives to the polls.

Supporters of a proposed constitutional amendment in Arkansas defining marriage as between one man and one woman are collecting signatures from voters — 80,570 are needed by July 2 to put the measure on a November ballot.

A resolution has been introduced urging the **California** Congress to approve a federal amendment banning gay marriages. Supporters of same-sex marriage are planning rival resolution opposing that amendment. Assemblyman Mark Leno has proposed redefining marriage as a gender-neutral civil contract between two people, instead of between a man and woman.

In **Georgia**, the Democrat-controlled House narrowly defeated a Senate-passed state constitutional amendment, but a proposed ban may be reconsidered.

Both legislative chambers in **Virginia** have passed a resolution urging Congress to approve a federal constitutional amendment banning gay marriages and civil unions. Both chambers also approved a bill, awaiting governor's signature, to ban recognition of civil unions from other states.

Both legislative chambers in **Wisconsin** have approved a state constitutional amendment defining marriage as union between a man and a woman and barring civil unions. The measure needs approval again in the next session and could go to voters in April 2005.

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