

# **Archbishop Kurtz praises New Jersey vote ‘for the truth of marriage’**

WASHINGTON - The New Jersey Senate “stood for the truth of marriage as a bulwark of the common good” with its recent vote to defeat a bill that would have legalized same-sex marriage, said the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage.

“Preserving marriage between one man and one woman is a matter of justice; indeed it is one of the premier social justice issues of our time,” said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., in a Jan. 11 statement. “It does not deny but rather supports basic human rights – especially the rights of children.”

By a 20-14 tally Jan. 7, the state Senate voted down a bill called the Marriage Equality Act; if the bill had passed and been signed into law, New Jersey would have joined five others states in allowing same-sex couples to marry. The others are Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

But Archbishop Kurtz noted in his statement that the New York state Senate rejected a similar measure by a 38-24 margin Dec. 2 and in November the voters in Maine overturned a legislative move to redefine marriage to include same-sex couples.

“The recent decisions in Maine, New York and New Jersey are signs of hope and sources of encouragement,” he said.

Archbishop Kurtz’s statement was released on the day that U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker was to begin hearing testimony in San Francisco in a federal court challenge to the constitutionality of California’s Proposition 8, which overturned same-sex marriage in that state.

“We are in a pivotal moment in this country on the issue of marriage as more and more people recognize that protecting the basic rights of persons need not and

should not come at the expense of the unique truth and value of marriage,” said Archbishop Kurtz, without making specific reference to the California case.

“The good of the love between husband and wife, the vital responsibilities of mothers and fathers, and the rights of children all deserve unique protection under law - all of these are indispensable to a just society that serves the dignity of all people and the common good,” he added.

The federal trial in San Francisco, *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, was expected to last two or three weeks.