

New York rallies fight governor's effort to legalize same-sex marriage

NEW YORK – With a push on by supporters of same-sex marriage to legalize it in New York State, supporters of traditional marriage – including New York's archbishop – are mounting their own campaigns to keep marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has made clear that he will sign a bill legalizing same-sex marriage but said recently he will not introduce one in the state Senate session that ends June 20 unless he's comfortable that the votes are there to pass it.

On May 24, more than 350 people attended a morning rally outside the Capitol in Albany, and hundreds more met with lawmakers in their offices later that day, according to organizers of the event.

Other recent efforts to fight any such measure included a rally in the Bronx that drew several thousand people, a pledge by the advocacy group National Organization for Marriage that it will spend \$1.5 million in advertising and campaign contributions to head off same-sex marriage, and a blog posting by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan saying that the definition of marriage is "hard-wired into our human reason."

The archbishop also wrote that he's dismayed to hear that Catholics and others who oppose same-sex marriage are branded as "bigots and bullies who hate gays."

"Nonsense!" he wrote in a blog posting titled "Marriage: the core of every civilization."

"We are not anti-anybody; we are pro-marriage," the archbishop wrote. "The definition of marriage is a given: It is a lifelong union of love and fidelity leading, please God, to children, between one man and one woman."

The archbishop said in the May 13 posting that upholding, strengthening and defending that definition "is not a posture of bigotry or bullying. Nor is it a denial of

the 'right' of anybody."

He said that in a "civilized, moral society, we have the right to do what we ought, not to do whatever we want," and that "to tamper with the definition of marriage, or to engage in some Orwellian social engineering about the nature and purpose of marriage, is perilous to all of us."

Meanwhile, the Bronx rally in defense of marriage May 15 drew some 3,000 people - a large majority of whom were Hispanics - who marched several blocks to the Bronx Supreme Court building.

Led by a Democratic state senator, the Rev. Ruben Diaz Sr., the marchers drew support from the surrounding neighborhood, with a number of curious onlookers joining in when they learned what was going on. There were many thumbs up, and a few thumbs down, from apartment windows overlooking the march.

Many carried signs reading "Marriage = One Man + One Woman," and cheers of "Alleluia" and "Jesus" rose up periodically.

"We want to bring the word out there, the fact that marriage is between a man and a woman," said Alex Soto, 33, a member of the Salem Evangelical Free Church who came from Staten Island to join the march.

At the courthouse on what was a rainy Sunday, Rev. Diaz, a Pentecostal minister, told the crowd that every state that has given the choice to the people has rejected same-sex marriage.

"I tell the governor and other who say Hispanics are for this - then let them vote for it," Rev. Diaz said. "If people say yes, then we will shut up."

Others who addressed the rally included Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, who said that same-sex marriage opponents are "standing up for the right of our churches to stand up and speak about the truth."

"Contact your legislators and tell them that marriage is the union between one man and one woman," he said. "Stand up for what is beautiful and true."

There currently are 26 confirmed “yes” votes in the Senate, where 32 are required to pass. Republicans hold a 32-30 majority, and there are four Democrats, including Rev. Diaz, who voted “no” last time it was up in the Senate. Rev. Diaz is considered a sure “no” again, but the other three are considered undecided. A handful of Republican senators are undecided as well.

New York’s Catholic bishops have called the effort to legalize same-sex marriage “a radical step that would remove from marriage its most basic, fundamental characteristic, thereby altering its very essence.”

“The joining of man and woman in the bond of marriage is a constant and visible reminder of God’s goodness and the beauty of the divine plan for humankind,” they said. “The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ himself raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. And, indeed, all of the world’s great religions rightfully recognize marriage as a holy union of a man and a woman.”