

Gay marriage advocates in Maryland launching broader push

By [John Wagner](#) July 12, 2011

A coalition of liberal state and national groups plans to launch a renewed effort Tuesday to pass legislation allowing same-sex marriages in Maryland.

Organizers of the group, Marylanders for Marriage Equality, say they intend to run a comprehensive campaign in advance of next year's legislative session, with the hope of producing [a different result than this year](#), when a bill passed the Senate but failed in the House. Same-sex marriage advocates say they were hamstrung by a late start in this year's session.

"We all started running toward getting a bill passed without building a campaign in advance," said Del. Heather R. Mizeur (D-Montgomery), a leading advocate of the legislation. This time, she said, "we'll be running a very aggressive campaign that targets specific districts and regions where we need to shore up our vote count."

The coalition, which plans to announce its effort at a press conference Tuesday in Baltimore, will be guided by a staff member on loan from the [Human Rights Campaign](#), a national gay-rights organization that is still celebrating passage of same-sex marriage legislation in New York, which became the sixth state where gay couples can marry.

Other members of the Maryland coalition include the state's largest gay-rights lobby, Equality Maryland; the national group [Freedom to Marry](#); **left-learning organization Progressive Maryland**; labor unions Service Employees International Union and Communications Workers of America; and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The more public lobbying effort is among the lessons that advocates in Maryland say they have learned from New York. Advocates are also [pushing Gov. Martin O'Malley \(D\)](#) to lay a more visible role in the effort.

During this year's debate in the Maryland House, several delegates grew uneasy about the legislation as black churches in Prince George's County and other foes stepped up their opposition.

The bill was also a hard sell among some Democrats in more conservative districts in Southern Maryland and the Baltimore suburbs, and only one Republican in the legislature supported the measure.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/maryland-politics/post/gay-marriage-advocates-in-maryland-launching-broader-push/2011/07/11/gIQAtqYQ9H_blog.html