Beat: Lifestyle

Same-sex couple marries in Texas under one-time order

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USPA News - A same-sex couple married in Austin on Thursday after a Texas judge issued a one-time order for a county clerk to stop relying on the state`s "unconditional" ban on same-sex marriages, prompting Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to file an emergency motion with the state`s supreme court. Sarah Goodfriend and Suzanne Bryant had filed an application in Travis County District Court to receive a temporary restraining order that would allow them to marry.

The couple cited various reasons for their request, most notably because Goodfriend has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer and may not have the time to wait the outcome of further court proceedings. Last year, a federal judge declared the state`s ban on same-sex marriages unconstitutional, but left the ban in place while appeals are considered. County Judge David Wahlberg ruled in favor of the request, however, ordering Travis County Clerk Dana Debeauvoir to immediately stop enforcing prohibitions against same-sex marriages in the case of Goodfriend and Bryant. "Given the time urgency, and the other circumstances in this case, and the ongoing violations of Plaintiffs` constitutional rights, the Court has concluded that good cause exists to allow filing of the pleadings in this matter in paper form," Judge Wahlberg said in Thursday`s ruling. Travis County Clerk spokeswoman Ginny Ballard said Clerk Debeauvoir would comply with the judge`s order, and the couple was able to get married soon after the ruling. "We are all waiting for a final decision on marriage equality. However, this couple may not get the chance to hear the outcome of this issue because one person`s health," Ballard said. "Therefore, a Travis County District Judge has ordered the County Clerk to act now in issuing a license for this medically fragile couple. It is important to note that this order applies only to the medically fragile couple who brought the court action." Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton immediately filed an emergency motion with the Texas Supreme Court in a bid to stay the district court`s temporary restraining order. He vowed to "aggressively defend" the state`s voter-approved ban on same-sex marriages and said the state will work to ensure that Goodfriend and Bryant`s marriage license is declared invalid. "The Texas Constitution clearly defines marriage as between one man and one woman, as Texas voters approved by an overwhelming majority. The law of Texas has not changed, and will not change due to the whims of any individual judge or county clerk operating on their own capacity anywhere in Texas," Paxton said. "Activist judges donÃ¢€™t change Texas law and we will continue to aggressively defend the laws of our state and will ensure that any licenses issued contrary to law are invalid."

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