

Tears of joy, sadness at court following gay marriage decision

Washington (dpa) - There were tears of joy - and some tears of sadness - on the Supreme Court steps, where citizens from all over the country gathered to witness a historic ruling on gay marriage on Friday.

"My son is gay, it's really emotional," said 58-year-old Patty Zimmerman from Portland, Oregon. "I'm just happy that everybody is considered to be an equal citizen of the country."

She was one of the hundreds outside the court who were overjoyed with the court's decision that upholds gay marriage in all 50 states. Zimmerman said she believes the decision grants an important human right.

"It's important, not only for my family but for the citizenship as a whole that in everyone's eyes, everyone has the same rights the same respect," Zimmerman said.

Same-sex couples embraced, took selfies and waved banners with the rainbow colours of the gay pride movement. Activists beamed with smiles and laughter, surging onto the normally forbidden steps of the Supreme Court.

A gay men's choir broke into singing The Star Spangled Banner, with hands over heart, and the rest of the crowd joined in.

The historic decision was released at 1400 GMT, sending runners racing out of the court and across the plaza with the 34-page opinion, for delivery to their assigned news media.

It was a dramatic moment, marking the end of an 11 year journey that started with Massachusetts' approval of gay marriage in 2004. In the meantime, same-sex marriages are legal in 37 states, and the ruling mainly affects the 13 states that have full or partial bans.

For James Obergefell, the lead plaintiff from Ohio, the it was a bittersweet day. His marriage to his husband, John, was not recognized by Ohio on John's death certificate, and he held a photo of his husband on the steps of the Supreme Court. "Today's decision affirms what millions across this country already know to be true in our hearts: Our love is equal," he said.

Some tears were shed by religious people who felt empathy and concern for those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

"It breaks my heart," said Christine Weick, 51, from Grand Rapids, Michigan. "My tears are for the Lord here."

She travels around the country with her message and spent the past 63 days waiting outside the court with a sign that said "Warning! God draws a line on gay marriage. Woe to those who cross it!"

She said her mission comes out of her love for those in the homosexual community. "It's not because I hate, it's because I love them - warning them because I love them," she said. The ruling means she has a bigger job now, she said. "It does break my heart because we took a step away from God as a nation."

Several dozen opponents of the ruling were heavily outnumbered by celebrants, and nary a boo was heard from them. Weick said the country has "moved away from God" because people are afraid to offend anyone.

"Sometimes the truth hurts," Weick said.

Ronald Brock, 58, said he feared America would suffer because of the ruling. Brock, who identified himself as a travelling, independent Christian missionary, called the ruling an "absolute disgrace" and the Supreme Court "insane."

But Adam Boyd of Cheyenne, Wyoming, was buoyant over the ruling.

"I always wanted to get married, I always wanted to have a family," he said. "Now I get to participate in this as an American."

The 22-year-old member of the LGBT community said he thinks opponents of the law will come around.

"It's just a cultural view of how they were raised," Boyd said. "People resist change because something is scary and unknown and new and once people realize nothing bad is going to happen then the world moves on."

Regardless, he said that he never believed this day, this court ruling, would come. "I grew up in a very conservative town in Wyoming," Boyd said. "This was really a chance to see history be made and see that some change can actually happen in this country."

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