

Nation

Senators offer amendment against gay 'marriage'

By Stephen Dinan
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Ban sought on federal, state recognition of same-sex unions

Several senators introduced a constitutional amendment yesterday to prohibit the federal government from recognizing homosexual "marriages" and to allow states to ignore such unions conducted in other states.

Sen. Wayne Allard, Colorado Republican, introduced the legislation on what was expected to be the final day of voting in the Senate this year.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled last week that the state's constitution prohibits the state

from denying same-sex couples the right to "marry" and to enjoy the privileges that come with marriage. The court gave the legislature 180 days to craft a law to allow such rights.

Opponents say such a law would open the way for homosexual couples who "marry" in Massachusetts to sue for recognition in their own states.

"What's happened in Massachusetts means that we're now in a race against time. If

we want our laws to reflect the values and beliefs of most Americans about marriage, we're going to need to pass the federal marriage amendment," said Matt Daniels, president of the Alliance for Marriage, which wrote the text of the amendment.

It reads: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the Constitution of any State, nor State or Federal law, shall be construed to re-

quire that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

"This language is simple, direct and to the point. This union is sacred and must remain so," Mr. Allard said as he introduced the amendment. "This resolution is a starting point for a more comprehensive discussion. I look forward to having an involved, informed debate with the other members of this chamber."

Rep. Marilyn Musgrave,

Colorado Republican, introduced the same amendment in the House months ago.

Some conservative groups had been arguing for introduction of a broader amendment that would have dictated what sort of civil union benefits states could offer.

But Mr. Daniels said that endorsements by Mr. Allard and Republican co-sponsors Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas and Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama show where the debate is headed.

It's not clear whether Congress will act quickly next year.

Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act seven years ago, stating that states do not have to recognize same-sex "marriages" from other states. Republican leaders said last week that they want to see how the courts handle that law before they proceed with an amendment.

Amending the Constitution requires the votes of two-thirds of the members in both chambers of Congress and approval in three-fourths of state legislatures.