

The Boston Globe

Thousands attend same-sex marriage rally in Boston

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By Sarah Gantz, Boston Globe Correspondent

Thousands of people rallied outside Boston City Hall today to voice their support for same-sex marriage and protest the recent California vote that made it illegal in that state.

Despite intermittent rain, about 4,000 people from Boston and beyond attended, organizers estimated. Boston Police do not make official crowd estimates.

Briellen Daggett said she and her girlfriend had planned to move to California next year. "I absolutely will not move there," unless the law is reversed, said Daggett, 20, of Middleborough.

Brightly colored signs and rainbow flags were scattered through the crowd, which gathered around a stage as activists from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and MassEquality spoke, along with state and local politicians.

Ryan Brown, a field organizer for MassEquality, said the rally was organized in just a few days by a handful of people.

Massachusetts and Connecticut are the only two states that allow same-sex marriage.

Crowds also gathered in small communities and major cities around the country, including New York City, San Francisco and Chicago, to vent their frustrations, celebrate gay relationships and renew calls for change.

"We are the American family. We live next door to you, we teach your children, we take care of your elderly," said Heather Baker, a special education teacher from Boston who addressed the crowd at City Hall Plaza. "We need equal rights across the country."

On the outskirts of the crowd, a man wearing a sandwich board sign condemning same-sex marriage handed out leaflets. Bob, a 78-year-old Chelsea resident, declined to give his last name.

"I'm against gay marriage and I'm against homosexuality. It's a danger to the country because God is against it," he said.

Material from The Associated Press was used in this report.