

# MARRIAGE: Representatives say court ignoring will of people

From A1  
between one man and one woman, as soon as same-sex marriage was legalized in Hawaii.

"It's not against anybody," she said. "It's just that marriage is a man and a woman. But I guess the (court's) opinion was different."

"I'm hopeful the people of California still support marriage between one man and one woman," said Assemblywoman Sharon Runner of Lancaster. "In this era, we're tending to have to go to the people of California because we can't get legislation and initiatives through that liberal judges won't send back."

Her husband, state Sen. George Runner, said the wheels are already in motion for a constitutional amendment.

"Who would have thought you needed to have the constitution tell you what a marriage is," he said. "Californians have already done this once, I think they will respond once again."

George Runner occupies the Senate seat formerly held by Knight.

"This was a core concern for Pete in regard to the degradation of the

traditional family," George Runner said. "Pete was the kind of guy who thought people could live the life they want, but not to have the right to occupy the traditions of our society when it comes to marriage."

Knight's son, Palmdale City Councilman Steve Knight, said a constitutional amendment is likely, despite Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's saying he will not support the amendment.

"I think it has a good chance of happening," Steve Knight said. "I don't see how you can look the voters in the eye — that big a majority — and say, I really don't care what you think."

Similar statements came Thursday from county Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and from Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon of Santa Clarita, who represents much of the Antelope Valley in Congress.

McKeon said the state court stepped "outside the bounds of its duty" and showed "utter disregard for the democratic process" in nixing Prop. 22, adding that "it appears partisan politics and personal opinions

are taking precedence over the rule of law, and that's an alarming turn of events."

Antonovich, meanwhile, said, "This is another decision where four members of the judiciary reject the will of the people who overwhelming voted in 2000 to ban same sex marriage."

Unlike Massachusetts, California has no residency requirement for obtaining a marriage license, meaning gays from around the country are likely to flock to the state to be wed, said Jennifer Pizer, a gay-rights attorney who worked on the case.

The ultimate reach of the ruling could be limited, however, since most states do not recognize gay marriages performed elsewhere. Nor does the federal government.

The conservative Alliance Defense Fund said it would ask the justices for a stay of the decision until after the fall election in hopes of adding California to the list of 26 states that have approved constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage.

"We're obviously very disappointed in the decision. The remedy is a constitutional amendment. The con-

stitution defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman," said Glen Levy, senior counsel for the organization.

Opponents of gay marriage could also ask the high court to reconsider. If the court rejects such a request, same-sex couples could start getting married in 30 days, the time it typically takes for the justices' opinions to become final.

The justices said they would direct state officials "to take all actions necessary to effectuate our ruling," including requiring county marriage clerks to carry out their duties "in a manner consistent with the decision of this court."

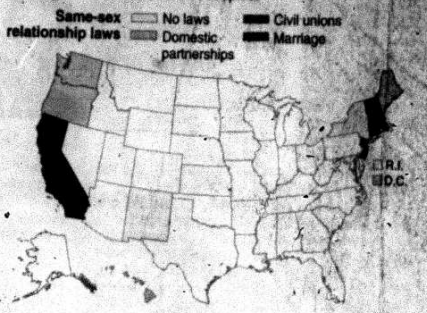
The case was set in motion in 2004 when Newsom threw City Hall open to gay couples to get married in a calculated challenge to California law. Four-thousand gay couples wed before the Supreme Court put a halt to the practice after a month.

Two dozen gay couples then sued, along with the city and gay rights organizations.

Attorney General Jerry Brown's office, which argued to uphold the

## Issues persist in California gay rights

Gay and lesbian couples can start getting married in California after Thursday's ruling becomes effective in 30 days, though it's unclear when individual counties will be prepared to issue marriage license to same-sex couples.



NOTE: Hawaii has a reciprocal benefits law; voters in 26 states have approved constitutional amendments that ban same-sex marriage

ban, said it would not be releasing a statement on the ruling.

Thursday's ruling could alter the dynamics of the presidential race, and state and congressional contests by causing a backlash among conservatives and drawing them to the polls in large numbers.

# GOP Assembly candidates discuss public safety

By WILLIAM P. WARFORD  
Valley Press Staff Writer

In advance of the June 3 primary election, the Antelope Valley Press asked the candidates in the 36th Assembly District for their views on the issues. We wanted to give the candidates an opportunity to share their views with the voters and to give the voters a chance to see how candidates responded, unfiltered and in their own words.

Three candidates — Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford, Antelope Valley

College trustee Steve Fox and Palmdale City Councilman Steve Knight — are running for the Republican nomination.

Pastor Maggie Campbell and Westside Union School District board member Linda Jones are running for the Democratic nomination.

The series will continue periodically over the next couple of weeks. Today's installment features Republicans on public safety.

**U**The governor is planning to grant early release to hundreds of prison inmates to save money. Do you support this idea? Explain why or why not.

**Fox:** I am appalled at the governor's planned early release of hundreds of prisoners. They were put in prison for good reasons, to protect us from them. If they do the crime, they should do their full time. Some prisoners cannot be rehabilitated. We need to house prisoners in tents and deport illegal immigrants who have committed crimes rather than waste tax dollars in building more prisons.

**Knight:** No. We're facing a major deficit, but releasing criminals will only cost us more in the long run. If we aren't punishing them, we only encourage repeat offenders. We believe as a people that if you are going to commit crimes, there will be a consequence. Budget cuts ought to be made in the ever-increasing social benefits we provide to illegal aliens first, and then we can look at other welfare programs and government bureaucracy.

**Ledford:** Absolutely no. Public safety should always be the number one budgetary priority; criminals should be serving their full prison term.

**2) Should California retain the Three Strikes law? What, if any, changes would you like to see made to this law?**

**Fox:** California should retain the Three Strikes law, but further crystallize which crimes fall within the classification. It is a proper deterrent for committing crimes.

**Knight:** Yes. Three Strikes has gone a long way to reduce recidivism. Any attempt to weaken it will lead to more street crime. I believe the system is better because of the Three Strikes law. This law keeps the criminals that have proven they do not want to live in a peaceful society incarcerated. I support greater sentencing enhancements for gang members and tougher penalties for violent crime. I support the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative on the November ballot to help fight street and gang crime.

**Ledford:** Yes, absolutely. I don't think there are any changes needed.

## Election 2008

3) What role, if any, should the state play in controlling illegal immigration?

**Fox:** The state should start enforcing the immigration laws that are already on the books. Police should be allowed to ask someone if they are an illegal immigrant and immediately deport them. Any illegal immigrant convicted of a crime should be deported forthwith and forever barred from our country. We should not have to pay for housing some other country's criminals in our prisons. We need to protect our borders and ensure that people who want to come here illegally cannot come here at all. Illegal immigrants should be denied all social services, prevented from gaining driver's licenses and denied federal grants for education.

**Knight:** The first and best thing the state should do is eliminate all incentives for illegal aliens to come here. That means no driver's licenses, welfare checks, tuition breaks or other benefits. If we take away their reason for being here, namely all the handouts, the problem will decrease. Additionally, we need to do whatever it takes to prod the federal government to do its job. We need a border security fence now. If the federal government won't do its job, I suggest we take the opportunity to create our own California Border Police agency, as allowed by federal law. The money we save in service provided to illegal aliens will be over \$10 billion.

**Ledford:** The state should secure the borders; we should not give benefits to people who are not legalized residents or citizens. We should enforce all existing state and federal immigration laws vigorously.

**4) Do you believe progress has been made in combating the problem of the Valley being a "dumping ground" for parolees and sex offenders? Explain why or why not. If no, what more should be done?**

**Fox:** Not enough progress has been made in controlling sex offenders from being dumped in our community. I believe the state should give our cities the authority to bar sex predators from resettling in our community after they are released from prison. Let them find someplace else to live. Some people just cannot be rehabilitated. We need to protect

our children and our community.

**Knight:**

We've made a great deal of progress, but more needs to be done.

Positive steps include passage of Jessica's Law, the MOU with

Department of Corrections to limit parolees in the AV to those from the AV, and the conversion of the prison to a reception center without visitation. These efforts, combined with the Palmdale and Lancaster sheriff's stations' relentless attack on the people terrorizing our community has resulted in a huge decrease in crime. My 17 years as a police officer on the street combating crime face-to-face has given me the invaluable experience to confront crime problems at the state level.

**Ledford:** We still have the highest number of parolees and sexual predators per capita in the state; we need to have a fair share of distribution of these criminals. Santa Clarita, for example, has a much lower number per capita, and this is not fair.

**5) Beginning July 1, motorists can be ticketed for driving while talking on a hand-held cellphone. In your**



FOX



KNIGHT



LEDFORD

view, does this fall into the category of good legislation or "nanny state" intrusion on people's rights? Explain.

**Fox:** Statistics have shown cellphones utilized with your hands can be dangerous. It only takes one negligent second to cause the loss of life and limb, therefore, I believe that cellphones should be restricted to a

hands-free device.

**Knight:** This is a great example of nanny-state legislation. Law enforcement has the tools to enforce activities that are detrimental to driving or deter one's attention from the road. The government does not have to double up laws, so they can feel like they are doing something. I am not the candidate that is going to over-regulate the situation or write a law that makes me look good. If the law is needed, I will support it, but if you are driving while distracted with some other activity, you can already be cited.

**Ledford:** Yes, I do support this legislation because it will reduce accidents, and thus lower insurance and improve public safety.

*Next installment: Democrats on public safety.*

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