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## Marriage Equality Codified by Senate Vote Respect for Marriage Act to Guarantee Same-Sex Marriage Legality

The historic Respect for Marriage Act (RFMA) passed in the Senate on November 29, 2022 by a vote of 61-36, considered a bipartisan triumph. In light of the ongoing assault against the LGBTQ+ community, 568,000 married same-sex couples will rest easier tonight knowing that their marriages will be protected under federal law. The last federal legislation supporting the LGBTQ+ community was when Don't Ask Don't Tell was repealed on September 20, 2012.

Republican Senators voting for the bill included Roy Blunt (Mo.), Richard Burr (N.C.), Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), Susan Collins (Maine), Joni Ernst (Iowa), Cynthia M. Lummis (Wyo.), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Rob Portman (Ohio), Mitt Romney (Utah), Dan Sullivan (Alaska), Thom Tillis (N.C.) and Todd C. Young (Ind.).

The concern over protecting same-sex marriage arose when the court overturned *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022, removing a woman's protected right to an abortion. The legal framework for *Roe v. Wade* is shared with *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which is the decision that legalized marriage equality nationwide in 2015. Given the Supreme Court's proven conservative bias, equality activists were concerned that same-sex marriage rights would be eroded next.

The bill will now return to the House, where Democrats are in the majority and President Biden has pledged to sign the legislation, which overturns the Defense of Marriage Act. RFMA requires state and federal governments to recognize same-sex marriages and interracial marriages performed in other states.

Keene Pride's President, Adam Toepfer, said "While not perfect, this is a great step toward codifying the laws to ensure LGBTQ+ couples receive the same marriage rights as straight couples. It can be incredibly discouraging that we celebrate when just twelve republicans made the right choice to be decent human beings, while 36 of their colleagues would rather see same sex marriage abolished. The fight is not over. This bill does not guarantee all states will allow same sex marriage, states still have the ability to ban it. We must push harder to make sure marriage equality is guaranteed in all states."