



Wisconsin Gov. Walker fires lawyer defending gay rights

By GoPride.com News Staff

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"Everything that Gov. Walker is doing is ideological," said fired attorney

MADISON, WI -- Republican Gov. Scott Walker has removed the attorney representing Wisconsin in a lawsuit challenging that state's domestic partner registry.

In a lawsuit, the conservative group Wisconsin Family Action claims the registry violates the state's ban on gay marriage because it grants same-sex couples a number of legal rights including limited hospital visitation and inheritance rights after joining the registry.

Former Gov. Jim Doyle, a Democrat who initiated the registry in 2009, appointed Madison attorney Lester Pines after state Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen refused to defend the registry. Pine's firm, Cullen Weston Pines and Bach, was terminated by Walker earlier this week.

"Gov. Walker is ideologically opposed to equal rights for gay and lesbian and transgendered people as is everyone in his administration as far as I can tell and they will be probably want to take steps to ensure that gay and lesbian and transgendered people do not have equal rights," Pines [said](#).

Walker's spokesman, Cullen Werwie, told the [Associated Press](#) that Walker is working to appoint a new attorney in the case.

Gay rights advocates are concerned that the conservative governor, who has gained national attention in recent weeks for his proposal to do away with public employee unions, will fill the position with people who are more aligned with his perspective on gay rights.

"Everything that Gov. Walker is doing is ideological," Pines said. "I don't see that his administration has any particular respect for the law per se."

Whoever Walker chooses to represent the state in the case will have to share the defense with lawyers from the Chicago office of Lambda Legal after the gay rights group was asked to join efforts to defend the registry.

"We remain steadfast in defending a law this is clearly constitutional," said Christopher Clark a Lambda Legal staff lawyer. "We fear that the governor's actions signals his intention to reverse the position of the state and no longer defend the domestic partnership law."

Lambda Legal joins Fair Wisconsin, a statewide gay rights advocacy group, and several same-sex couples.

Wisconsin Family Action is also getting legal help from the Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal organization based in Arizona.