

State of California accepts 'bride, groom' certificate

Settles lawsuit over rejection of marriage license

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The state of California has settled a lawsuit filed by a couple whose marriage license – including the words "bride" and "groom" – was rejected by officials. "In the ongoing battle for traditional marriage, this is a gratifying win," said Kevin Snider, chief counsel of [Pacific Justice Institute](#).

"As a decision in the Prop. 8 cases nears, PJI will continue to fight for the right of ordinary citizens to define the most basic institution of marriage," he said. "No court or state agency should be allowed to usurp that right."

The nonprofit legal group took up the case of Gideon and Rachel Coddington, who were married last year just after state officials arbitrarily modified their marriage licenses to substitute the words "Party A" and "Party B" for the traditional "Bride" and "Groom." The change came just after the California Supreme Court said it wanted the state to create "marriage" for same-sex couples. The decision was overturned by voters in November with their approval of Proposition 8, which installed in the state constitution a definition of marriage limited to one man and one woman.

"When the Coddingtons jotted an explanatory 'Bride' and 'Groom' next to their personal information, the state rejected their license, delaying for months their ability to make other legal changes to reflect their new union. The state insisted that the Coddingtons could only be married as 'Party A' and 'Party B,'" Pacific Justice said. The group filed a lawsuit, and the state then announced it was canceling the controversial "Party A" and "Party B" forms. The state now has agreed to settle the lawsuit by accepting the marriage license and paying attorneys' fees, Pacific Justice said.

[As WND reported](#) at the time the lawsuit was filed, Brad Dacus of Pacific Justice said after the state Supreme Court ordered "marriage" for homosexuals, "Many thought we couldn't go any lower. We discovered actually we can." State officials had determined the Coddingtons' license, with the references to "Bride" and "Groom," "does not comply with California registration laws."

Dacus described the state's actions as "an outright act of hostility towards the established rights of people to be married as husband and wife, bride and groom." Pacific Justice was assisted in the case by Walnut Creek, Calif., affiliate attorneys Steven N.H. Wood and Christopher Schweickert of the law firm Bergquist, Wood and Anderson, LLP.

"The state's acceptance of the marriage license and agreement to pay our attorney's fees is a clear victory not only for the Coddingtons, but also for common sense. The state's previous rejection of the marriage license caused the Coddingtons considerable anguish, as well as financial harm. That has now been remedied," said Wood.