



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

HARDY MYERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2004

Attorney General Hardy Myers today announced that agreement has been reached on a procedure and schedule for accelerated consideration of constitutional challenges to Oregon statutes relating to marriage for same-sex couples.

The agreement includes the following elements

- Same-sex couples and other parties affected by existing statutes will file a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the relevant Oregon statutes no later than noon on Wednesday, March 24, 2004 in Multnomah County.
- Specific time lines for legal proceedings. Under the schedule, all written arguments will be submitted to Multnomah County Circuit Judge Frank Bearden on or before April 14, 2004.
- Except for the complaint to be filed on Wednesday, none of the parties will file any new claims in Multnomah County. All of their attention and resources will be devoted to thorough and rapid briefing of the issues involved in and arising from the constitutional issues presented in the case, and those issues will be presented to the trial court before any other issues are argued.
- Multnomah County will intervene in the new lawsuit without objection from any of the parties to the agreement.
- The parties who previously had sued Multnomah County and who are represented by Portland attorney Kelly Clark will dismiss their pending cases and will intervene in the new lawsuit without objection from any of the parties to the agreement.

Attorney General Myers expressed appreciation to the parties and to Multnomah County Circuit Judge Henry Kantor, who facilitated the agreement, "for their recognition that it is in everyone's interest to achieve a speedy resolution of the issues." The parties

to the agreement are the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of itself, same-sex couples, and Basic Rights Oregon; the individuals and Defense of Marriage Coalition represented by Clark; the State of Oregon represented by Myers; and Multnomah County represented by Agnes Sowle.

On Thursday, Myers wrote to the clerks of each of Oregon's 36 counties to inform them that the State Registrar would not accept for registration any marriage certificate for a same-sex marriage. Today, citing the agreement for expedited resolution, Myers urged every county, including Benton County, to defer issuing any marriage licenses to same-sex couples at least until the Multnomah County Circuit Court can rule on the constitutional issues.

###

Media Contacts

For Attorney General Myers: Kevin Neely (503) 320-9487

For Multnomah County: Agnes Sowle (503) 988-3138

For ACLU: David Fidanque (541) 954-7731

AGS13721.DOC