# Thailand's Senate Approves Marriage Equality Bill, Paving the Way for Same-Sex Marriage Legalization



On June 18, 2024, Thailand's Senate approved a marriage equality bill with a vote of 130 to 4, marking a significant step toward legalizing same-sex marriage in the country. The House of Representatives had already passed the legislation in March. The bill is now awaiting review by a Senate committee, the Constitutional Court, and the royal endorsement from the king, which is anticipated to be granted.

This legislation would make Thailand the first country in Southeast Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, advancing its status as a relative haven for LGBTQ+ people in the region. Activists and supporters gathered in downtown Bangkok to celebrate, despite the intense heat, marking the moment with colorful balloons and a parade featuring music and performances.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin announced plans to host a celebration for activists, although he could not attend due to a Covid infection.

The bill amends Thailand's Civil and Commercial Code to define marriage as a partnership between two individuals aged 18 and over, regardless of gender. It ensures equal rights for LGBTQ+ couples in adoption, tax allowances, property inheritance, and medical consent.

The path to legalizing same-sex marriage in Thailand has been long and contentious, with the first version of the bill introduced over 20 years ago. While Thailand is generally open to gay couples, it remains socially conservative in other areas, as seen in the recent dismissal of a proposal to allow gender changes on official documents.

Despite opposition from critics who argue that the bill could undermine traditional family structures, a majority of the Thai public supports it. A Pew Research Center survey found that 60% of Thai adults favored legalizing same-sex marriage.