# Thailand Senate Approves Landmark Same-Sex Marriage Equality Bill



**Thailand Approves Landmark Same-Sex Marriage Equality Law**

On June 18, 2024, Thailand's Senate approved a landmark bill legalizing same-sex marriage, making the country the first in Southeast Asia to recognize such unions. The legislation passed with overwhelming support, garnering 130 votes in favor, with only four against and 18 abstentions. This law amends the country's Civil and Commercial Code, replacing gender-specific terms with gender-neutral ones, and extends all legal, financial, and medical rights traditionally afforded to heterosexual marriages to same-sex couples.

Human rights activists, who had campaigned for years, hailed the Senate's approval as a significant victory. Celebrations erupted outside the parliament and across the country, with supporters waving rainbow flags and participating in various festive events, including a rally in central Bangkok featuring a drag show. The law now awaits the pro forma endorsement by King Maha Vajiralongkorn, after which it will be published in the Government Gazette and should take effect within 120 days.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, who could not attend the celebrations due to testing positive for COVID-19, expressed his pride in the collective efforts that led to the bill’s passage. He emphasized the law’s importance for unifying the diverse Thai society and reiterated the government's commitment to fighting for social rights for all.

The passage of this legislation positions Thailand as the third country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, following Taiwan and Nepal. It also further cements the country's reputation as relatively progressive in terms of LGBTQ+ rights within a region where such rights are still heavily contested.