



News Release

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Washington same sex couples: follow-up data report released

OLYMPIA — It's the one year anniversary of the state's same sex marriage law, and the latest statistics shows same sex couples made up 17 percent of marriages in Washington in that time. Between the law's effective date, December 6, 2012, and the most recent complete month of data, September 30, 2013, there were 7,071 same sex couples among the 42,408 total couples who married in the state during that period of time.

So far, most of the state's same sex marriages, 62 percent, occurred between two women. The top five Washington counties where same sex marriages occurred were King County with 3,452; Clark County with 785; Pierce County with 486; Snohomish County with 330; and Thurston County with 300 marriages. Garfield County is the only county in Washington where no same sex marriages were performed. These numbers may not represent the number of marriage licenses granted by these counties.

It appears Washington's same sex marriage law is drawing people to the state to marry. In 24 percent of same sex marriages, both spouses live in another state. There were 524 same sex marriages in which both parties lived in Oregon. For 170 same sex marriages, the couple lived in Texas, and, for 155 same sex marriages, the couple lived in California. Among opposite sex couples, both spouses were from another state in only 6 percent of marriages.

Each person getting married in Washington can choose whether they would like their marriage certificate to refer to them as bride, groom, or spouse. Within both male and female same sex marriages, most individuals preferred to use the term spouse. On June 30, 2014, all Washington same sex registered domestic partnerships will be converted to same sex marriages unless at least one partner is 62 years of age or older, the couple has gotten legally married, or the couple has legally dissolved their domestic partnership.

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The state Department of Health may not yet have received records for all marriages during the reporting period. All information on a marriage certificate, including gender, is reported by the couple or the officiant. After the ceremony, the officiant files the marriage certificate with the county auditor that issued the marriage license and the auditor files the marriage certificate with the state health department.

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