

SAN FRANCISCO: California's same-sex weddings have been called off again - at least until next year. A US federal appeals court has put gay marriage in the state on hold indefinitely, interrupting the wedding plans of scores of couples who were preparing to exchange vows when a temporary hold was set to expire today.

The brief order by a three-judge panel of the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals prevents an early showdown on the marriage question at the US Supreme Court. Supporters of same-sex marriage said they would not appeal Monday's order.

A US District Court judge decided on August 4 that California's Proposition 8, which banned gay marriage, violated the Constitution and later ordered same-sex marriage to resume today unless a higher court intervened. The panel's decision gave no explanation for overturning the judge's order directing the state to once again marry same-sex couples.

"California voters spoke clearly on Proposition 8, and we're glad to see their votes will remain valid while the legal challenges work their way up through the courts. Invalidating the people's vote based on just one judge's opinion would not have been appropriate and would have shaken the people's confidence in our elections," said Andy Pugno, the general counsel for ProtectMarriage.com, which filed the appeal.

A Loyola Law School professor, Richard Hasen, however, said Monday's order was strategically advantageous for supporters of same-sex marriage, no matter how disappointed many couples may be. If the panel had refused to place a hold on the August ruling, the supporters of Proposition 8 were prepared to seek a stay from the Supreme Court. The high court is believed to be divided on the question of gay marriage and a vote on a hold might have pushed the justices into taking an early position on the question.

"I think there are strategic reasons why even the most ardent supporter of gay marriage could opt for a stay," said Professor Hasen, an expert in federal court stays. "The concern is that rushing things to the Supreme Court could lead to an adverse result [for supporters of gay marriage]."

Source: [Brisbane Times](#)