

## Key Md. delegate considering change to gay marriage bill

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ANNAPOLIS, Md. - A key delegate on Maryland's House Judiciary Committee says she is considering a major change to the same-sex marriage bill already delayed in the panel.

Delegate Tiffany Alston, D-Prince George's, delayed a vote on the bill Tuesday morning by skipping the session in protest. On Thursday, she said she is researching an amendment that would better reflect a separation between church and state by changing the bill to be about civil unions.

"I have a decision that I have to make that's going to satisfy my constituency as well as my conscience," Alston says.

Alston says the change she is considering would allow Maryland residents to get civil union licenses if they wished to be married, whether they are heterosexual or homosexual.

She says she believes the change would be "a good balance," but does not know if it would receive support from other committee members.

"I have what I believe to be a solution," she says. "I don't know if it will garner any political will or favor."

At least one member of the panel -- Delegate Keiffer Mitchell, D-Baltimore City -- says he would not be in favor of the change.

"My intention is to vote for the same-sex marriage (bill)," he says. "Period."

Efforts to extend full marriage rights to same-sex couples stalled in the House this week after speeding through the Senate.

House leaders have had trouble finding support on the committee for the bill and have spent the last two days lobbying members.

Delegate Joseph Vallario, D-Prince George's and committee chairman, said Thursday he would likely delay voting again on the bill.

Vallario said his committee has a lengthy list of bills to hear and is not likely to have time for a vote on the measure.

"I don't know whether the votes are there or not, we'll wait and see," Vallario says.

Delegate Don Dwyer, R-Anne Arundel, believes the longer it takes to take a vote on the measure, the more support the bill loses.

"Every day that this thing delays, more and more news goes out about it and the pressure continues to mount," Dwyer says.

*WTOP's Andrew Mollenbeck contributed to this report. Follow WTOP on [Twitter](#).*

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