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Posted at 12:19 PM ET, 03/ 1/2011

Missing delegates stall Md. same-sex marriage bill

By John Wagner

Maryland's same-sex marriage legislation hit an unexpected roadblock Tuesday morning when two delegates who had expressed support for the bill failed to show up for a committee vote.

Colleagues frantically tried to locate Del. Tiffany T. Alston (D-Prince George's) and Del. Jill Carter (D-Baltimore) for about half an hour before calling off a scheduled vote in the House Judiciary Committee. Both Alston and Carter are co-sponsors of the House version of the bill.

"It simply means the soup's not ready yet," said Don H. Dwyer Jr. (R-Anne Arundel), a staunch opponent of the bill, suggesting supporters were short of votes.

Del. Luiz R.S. Simmons (D-Montgomery), a bill supporter, said he believes there is still a possibility of securing the 12 votes needed to pass the bill out of committee and suggested the absence of his colleagues showed "dissatisfaction with the way this bill has been organized."

"We'll have to see if we can round up 12 votes," Simmons said.

The bill had been [moving forward at a rapid clip](#) since passing the Senate 25 to 21 on Thursday night. The House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the bill Friday and convened Tuesday morning after supporters thought they had secured the needed votes to send the bill to the floor later this week.

Del. Joseph F. Vallario Jr. (D-Prince George's), chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said the panel would try to vote again later Tuesday.

By John Wagner | March 1, 2011; 12:19 PM ET

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