

Same-sex marriage amendment Bill approved

The National Assembly's Home Affairs Committee has adopted the Civil Union Amendment Bill, notes a [News24](#) report. The Bill affords same-sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples. 'The committee is of the view that this amendment is a strong affirmation to the right of equality before the law and further prevents any discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation,' parliamentary communication service's Hlomani Chauke said in a statement. The purpose behind the amendment was to repeal section 6 of the Civil Union Act, which allowed a marriage officer to inform the Minister that 'he or she objects on the ground of conscience, religion and belief to solemnising a civil union between persons of the same sex'. **'This infringed the right to equality before the law and the right not to be discriminated against by the state on grounds of sexual orientation,'** Chauke explained. The Bill proposes a transitional period of 24 months for the Department of Home Affairs to enable officers an opportunity to be trained if it is passed.