

**(Wyo.)-Wyo. Senate Defeats Gay Discrimination Bill**

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 01/31/2013 02:22 PM

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) - The Wyoming State Senate has defeated a bill that would ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The Senate voted 13-to-17 Thursday against the bill.

Supporters including sponsor Sen. Chris Rothfuss, a Laramie Democrat, said that passing the bill was a civil rights issue.

Opponents, however, said they were concerned that the bill would classify gays and lesbians as a protected class of citizens and lead to employment lawsuits.

Gay activists have been pushing the bill, saying it's essential to give Wyoming gays and lesbians protections in the workplace and elsewhere. Opponents, however, have expressed concern that the bill could impinge on religious freedoms.

The House this session has defeated two other bills that would have permitted same-sex marriages and same-sex domestic partnerships.