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by Rex Wockner
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Excerpt:

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Uruguay passes civil-union law  
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Uruguay's House of Representatives passed a civil-union law for gay and straight couples Nov. 29.

The measure had passed the Senate in September. It is expected to become law before year's end.

Uruguay will be the first Latin American country to grant same-sex couples access to civil unions on the national level.

Couples must live together for five years before they can take advantage of the law.

Spousal rights will be granted in areas such as health care, pensions, parenting and inheritance.

Other Latin American localities with civil-union laws include the city of Buenos Aires, the Argentine province of Río Negro, the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, Mexico City, and the Mexican state of Coahuila, which borders Texas.

Assistance: Bill Kelley

Filed from San Diego