

ASIA

## Singapore, conservative party opens door to LGBT community

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Conservatives in Singapore have **cause for concern** - and rightfully so- regarding the Singapore Government's recent statements regarding traditional marriage and family values. When questioned during a dialogue session at the National University of

Singapore Cultural Center in January 2025 on whether the government would recognize same-sex “marriages”, Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong **replied**: “The Government’s position is to let things take its natural course. People will discuss, people will have opinions, and their views may well evolve over a period of time.”

**Adding, the Singapore leader** said the country made a landmark decision a couple of years back following the **repeal of Section 377A of the Penal Code**. The Singapore government acknowledges the societal consensus that marriage is between a biological man and woman, Wong said. Yet he added: “This is where we are today. How will it evolve? I really do not know. Let us sit down and talk, let us continue to engage one another and let us do this organically.” While the Singapore leader attempted to stress that differences in stances regarding same-sex “marriages” should not divide Singapore society, his **seemingly fluid stance on the matter** has worried many social conservatives.

**Wong’s recent comments** have been juxtaposed by his **previous remarks on same-sex “marriages” in 2022**. Back then, the Singapore politician sought to reassure conservatives that the definition of marriage would not change “under my watch if the (People’s Action Party) PAP Government were to win the next General Election”. Also, Wong **declared** in 2022 that the **repeal of the law outlawing homosexual sex** would have no ramifications on other laws and national policies premised on the traditional definition of marriage.

**Fast forward to 2025**, and the Singapore leader’s (as well as the ruling party’s) views pertaining to same-sex “marriage” seem to have “evolved”. In January 2025, Singapore’s Law Minister K Shanmugam was seen going on a political walkabout in his constituency with **Deryne Sim**, a lawyer and activist, as per various media outlets like **The Straits Times**. These media reports **indicated** that Sim could be a potential People’s Action Party (PAP) candidate contesting in Singapore’s upcoming General Election (GE), scheduled to be held no later than November 2025.

**At first glance**, Sim might seem like any typical Singapore grassroots activist-turned-political wannabe, participating in community work and giving legal advice to Singapore residents. However, what these mainstream media outlets glossed over was the fact that Sim has a **documented track record of promoting the LGBTQ+ ideology** in Singapore. Moreover, Sim was a contributor to a **150-page legal guide** titled **“Same But Different”** that explained the “legal rights” for LGBTQ+ couples.

**Sim’s profile on General Assembly states**: “Deryne is a media and entertainment lawyer and an LGBTQ activist. She is part of Pink Dot SG, a social movement which

promotes acceptance and equality for LGBTQ people in Singapore. Her portfolio in Pink Dot SG encompasses providing legal advice to the organization and spearheading Red Dot for Pink Dot, the business networking arm of Pink Dot SG which conducts fundraising activities for Pink Dot SG and promotes workplace inclusion in Singapore. Additionally, she is a committee member with the Ready4Repeal movement, which advocates for the decriminalization of homosexuality in Singapore; and a contributor to the Same But Different legal guidebook for LGBTQ+ couples and families in Singapore.”

**Regardless** SG, a Singapore-based conservative site, **detailed** how Sim drew up legal resources that disputed Singapore’s traditional family framework and “actively pushed for legal and policy changes”. Some of the major measures Sim has proposed include permitting “LGBT NGOs to register as societies and charities, significantly enhancing their ability to raise funds and engage in advocacy”, campaigning for “changes to media regulations as well as claiming current governmental limitations on “positive LGBT representation limit outreach, particularly to older demographics”.

**Protect Singapore**, a Singapore-based conservative organization, also **documented** Sim’s **history** of **seeking** to **upend** the traditional idea of family and marriage in Singapore. Notably, Sim is not the only politician/activist reportedly endorsed by the ruling PAP of Singapore in their **quest** for new political talent.

**Member of Parliament (MP) and PAP member Louis Ng Kok Kwang** representing the Nee Soon East division of Singapore’s Nee Soon Group Representation Constituency (GRC) has been **vocal** about his support for the LGBTQ+ community in Singapore. During parliamentary debates on Singapore’s Workplace Fairness Bill to supposedly safeguard Singapore employees against “discrimination”, Ng **sought to push** for the LGBTQ+ cause: “Are we telling LGBTQ people that they are not protected from workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity? Are we telling employers that it is okay to discriminate against someone because of their sexual orientation and gender identity?”. Additionally, other PAP MPs have been **spotted** at LGBTQ+ events in the past, including the annual Pink Dot SG event.

**Given the aforementioned facts**, it behooves observers to question how the PAP, traditionally **seen** as a champion for socially conservative values in Singapore, could tolerate and even welcome left-leaning activists and politicians among its ranks. Timothy Weerasekera of Regardless SG attempted to rationalize the possible motivations behind the PAP’s move as follows: “For a **hegemonic party** like the PAP, floating a high-profile lesbian candidate like Sim makes political sense. It signals to younger, more liberal voters that the PAP’s “*big tent*” includes LGBT persons—even as it

maintains a conservative stance on paper. This is classic pragmatic politics. It isn't necessarily an ideological shift—it's just signalling. By introducing a candidate with a certain background, the PAP can test public reaction without making formal policy commitments. If the response is positive, they proceed. If it backfires, they adjust course."

**Weerasekera** elaborated, alluding to the case studies of some Singapore politicians including current president Tharman Shanmugaratnam and current Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan". Adding, Weerasekera critiqued the PAP's strategy: "Many are disappointed, seeing this as backtracking—after assurances on protecting family values, PAP is now introducing an activist with a track record of pushing contrary policies. To them, this contradicts its stated commitments. Beyond that, it signals **ideological drift**. Reaffirming pro-family policies while entertaining candidates with opposing views sends mixed signals, making PAP look inconsistent and risking alienation of its traditional voter base. Some fear this signals a broader shift in candidate selection, where diversity and inclusion take priority to appease younger liberal voters. Left unchecked, it could lead to the kind of institutional drift seen elsewhere—where early concessions to LGBT advocacy paved the way for deeper societal and legal shifts."

**Talk about** being politically expedient rather than being principled. Time will tell when Singapore voters - and the world- would realize if the PAP would still be the stalwart of traditional family values and social conservatism - or lean further left - to the detriment of Singapore's societal fabric.