

marriage and not affect benefits, so Michigan voters may not have known the consequences of what they were voting for when they approved the amendment, Falk said.

"It's hard to say what it is the citizens of Michigan really want, but it's also not like there's been a huge outcry across the state opposing this sets of rulings in the courts," he said.

Upon his arrival in Maryland, Falk said he plans to take a position at Johns Hopkins University, which is a private institution. Falk also said the gay community in Maryland seems to be heading in the opposite direction and receiving more rights instead of having them taken away.

While Falk and his partner are moving, the vast majority of university employees are standing their ground in Michigan and relying on their employers to protect their interests.

Scott Spector, a University of Michigan history professor, plans to remain in Michigan with his partner, Eric Firstenberg, who is attending graduate school at University of Detroit Mercy to become a physician assistant.

Spector believes his university is "being supportive and is trying to continue the benefits" it has offered its faculty, but he acknowledged that the Supreme Court decision "sent a signal" outside the university "that there is a more negative situation here."

"There is some possibility that potential faculty would be less

attracted to the University of Michigan because the formal same-sex benefit is not here," he said.

Peter Sparling, a dance professor at the University of Michigan, was part of a gay faculty alliance that persuaded the school to first give benefits to same-sex couples almost 20 years ago.

He said he and his partner, John Gutoskey, a visual artist, plan to stay in Michigan, but are apprehensive about a change in benefits. Sparling said he and his partner would need to leave the state if the University of Michigan could no longer offer benefits.

"If for some reason the university was forced to discontinue this kind of benefit ... then absolutely yes I would be forced to seek work elsewhere," he said.

While university employees react to the Supreme Court decision, gay rights advocates are drawing attention to the ruling as an example of the harm caused by state constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage.

Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry, said the court decision demonstrates how these amendments are "cruel and unfair and have no place in the laws of this country."

"The important thing for all us is to fight them to educate the public about why denying marriage and all other family protections is wrong," he said.

Wolfson even took issue with referring to such amendments as same-sex marriage bans, arguing

that they are "so pervasive in the lives of gays that they should simply be called "anti-gay" amendments.

Another group is drawing attention to the Michigan Supreme Court decision in the fight against a similar same-sex marriage ban proposed in Florida. Stephen Gaskill, spokesperson for Florida Red & Blue, an organization opposed to the proposed constitutional amendment, is playing up possible consequences of the amendment in an effort to urge Florida voters to reject the measure this November.

"This Supreme Court decision in Michigan just emphasizes and underscores exactly what the consequences are for Florida — people will lose benefits," he said.

Gaskill said there would be a "brain drain" of educated people leaving Florida if voters were to approve the amendment.

Wolfson said gays in states where these amendments have passed should remain there to "make a much stronger human connection between their families and their fellow citizens" in an effort to get bans overturned. Telling individual stories about how these amendments are affecting families will help convince the electorate to change its mind on the issue, he said.

"I can certainly understand on an individual level people needing to move in order to protect their families, but most of us need to stand and fight, and we can begin by fighting right now in the battles that loom this year," he said.

