



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN®

June 23, 2014

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder,

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest civil rights organization advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality, I am requesting that your office quickly ensure that committed, loving couples who were legally married in the states of Arkansas and Wisconsin are recognized as married by the federal government.

On January 9th, 2014, I wrote to you asking that you extend federal recognition to same-sex couples legally married in Utah. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your extension of federal recognition to gay and lesbian couples not only in Utah but in also in Michigan.

On June 28th, 2013, the day the U.S. Supreme Court issued its sweeping ruling in *Windsor v. United States*, you courageously declared that *Windsor* guaranteed, "Americans in same-sex marriages are entitled to equal protection and equal treatment under the law." Within the past year, your office acted urgently to broadly extend federal recognition to gay and lesbian couples in legally-conferred same-sex marriages. In addition, your office helped to ensure that same-sex couples in Michigan and Utah were granted that same federal recognition now needed by couples in Arkansas and Wisconsin.

Within the past two months, more than 1,000 same-sex couples have legally married in states with on-going court cases. In Arkansas, on May 6th, Pulaski County Circuit Court Judge Chris Piazza, found the state's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage violated the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In a state of joy and celebration marriages began, and over 450 same-sex couples received marriage licenses. On May 14th the Arkansas Supreme Court issued a stay on the lower court's decision pending appeal to the Arkansas Supreme Court, effectively halting same-sex marriages. In Wisconsin, just a month after the Arkansas's lower court's decision, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb overturned the state's ban on same-sex marriage, stating that same-sex couples "are entitled to the same treatment as any heterosexual couple." After an estimated 550 Wisconsin couples wed and just a week

after striking down the ban, on June 13th Barbara Crabb issued a stay on her decision pending appeal.

There is no legal reason to question the validity of these more than 1,000 marriages. Each was legally performed by a clerk representing the states of Arkansas and Wisconsin, in accordance with each state's statutes and constitution. There is simply no reason for the United States government not to extend federal recognition to these couples.

I thank you for giving your immediate attention to this matter. Your statement following the *Windsor* decision showed a deep understanding of the struggle and optimism of gay and lesbian couples in all 50 states. I hope that your office will once again seize the mantle of leadership, as you did in Utah and Michigan, and ensure that lawfully-married couples in Arkansas and Wisconsin receive the equal treatment that they deserve.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chad Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chad Griffin
President, Human Rights Campaign