



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN®

June 26, 2015

Governor Bill Haslam
Office of the Governor
1st Floor, State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Haslam,

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) more than 1.5 million members nationwide, I write in light of today's Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. As you are aware, this landmark decision has invalidated your state's ban on same-sex marriage. Under this case, Tennessee is also required to recognize all marriages legally entered into in other states and jurisdictions, including those between same-sex couples. In order to be in full compliance with the law, we urge you to take immediate action to ensure that all County Clerks begin issuing marriage licenses to all eligible Tennessee couples immediately. We also urge you to take affirmative steps to communicate the meaning and reach of this case to all government officials tasked with performing and recognizing marriages, including those performed outside of the state of Tennessee.

Delaying the issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples is not only unlawful, but allows the discriminatory impacts of an unconstitutional law to continue. In addition to access to recognition on the state level, same-sex couples will now have access to all federal benefits and services that have been out of their reach because of these laws. Lifeline programs like Social Security and Veterans Benefits look to the state of residence to determine eligibility. Further delaying implementation of this decision arbitrarily prevents these otherwise eligible couples and spouses from accessing these critical federal benefits.

We thank you for the opportunity to bring these issues to your attention. We hope that as the Governor, you will take the steps necessary to fully represent every Tennessean — including the nearly 130,000 who identify as LGBT. As a result of this decision there is only one way – and that is forward.

Sincerely,

Sarah Warbelow
Legal Director

Cc: Herbert H. Slatery III