



HUMAN  
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January 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 nation's largest civil rights organization advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality, I write to urge your office's immediate action on behalf of more than 1,300 legally married gay and lesbian couples in the state of Utah.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, 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." In the following months, your office acted urgently to broadly extend federal recognition to gay and lesbian couples in legally-conferred same-sex marriages. This has of course included many couples residing in Utah who were lawfully married in another jurisdiction.

Today, I am asking your office to ensure that same treatment applies to committed and loving couples that were legally married in the state of Utah between December 20<sup>th</sup>—when U.S. District Judge Robert Shelby ruled the state's amendment banning same-sex marriage unconstitutional—and January 6<sup>th</sup>—when the U.S. Supreme Court stayed Shelby's decision pending appeal to the Tenth Circuit.

There is no legal reason to question the validity of these more than 1,300 marriages. Each was legally performed by a clerk representing the State of Utah, in accordance with the state's statutes and constitution. Even the office of the governor of Utah—whose formal political position is one of opposition to marriage equality—urged state agencies to extend state marriage recognition to these couples during that 20 day period when same-sex marriages were being performed. Even though the governor's office has now made a political decision to cut off this recognition, it continues to insist that it makes no pronouncement about the validity of these unions.

Given this landscape of facts, there is simply no reason for the United States government not to extend federal recognition to these more than 1,300 couples.



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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 your office will once again seize the mantle of leadership and ensure that these lawfully-married couples receive the equal treatment that they deserve.

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

Sincerely yours,

Chad Griffin  
President, Human Rights Campaign