

American Immigration Council Applauds DOMA Decision

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Washington D.C. - Today, the Supreme Court unequivocally affirmed that there is no legitimate reason for the federal government to discriminate against married couples on account of their sexual orientation. The Justices struck down section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as between a man and a woman, noting in their decision, "DOMA's principal effect is to identify a subset of state-sanctioned marriages and make them unequal."

Today's historic decision means that our immigration system must stop treating gay and lesbian families differently than other families. For far too long, gay and lesbian U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents have been barred from obtaining immigration status for their noncitizen spouses. As a result, families have been separated and spouses of U.S. citizens and permanent residents have been deported from the United States.

President Obama issued an immediate directive to the Attorney General to "work with other members of my Cabinet to review all relevant federal statutes to ensure this decision, including its implications for Federal benefits and obligations, is implemented swiftly and smoothly."

The Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano also issued a statement to press confirming that DHS is "working with our federal partners, including the Department of Justice, [to] implement today's decision so that all married couples will be treated equally and fairly in the administration of our immigration laws."

"Far too often, exceptions have been carved out to exclude immigrants from basic rights and protections. We are pleased that the Administration has made it clear it intends for this important decision to apply fully to the immigration system" said Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council. "We urge the immigration agencies to work quickly to unite these families and honor the marriages that the Supreme Court has affirmed."

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