



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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News Release 2015-20

**THE IMPACT OF TODAY'S U.S. SUPREME COURT RULING ON
SAME-SEX COUPLES WHO MARRIED IN HAWAII**

HONOLULU – Today the United States Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have a fundamental right to marry under the United States Constitution in a ruling that brings marriage equality to all fifty States.

“The State of Hawai‘i filed an amicus brief in support of the petitioners in these cases. Today’s ruling means that same-sex couples who marry in Hawai‘i are married everywhere in this country,” said Attorney General Doug Chin.”

Nearly 4000 same-sex couples have married in Hawai‘i since our marriage equality act went into effect in December 2013. About two-thirds of those couples are non-residents. This means that before the court’s action today, depending on where they live, a couple who married in Hawai‘i might not have had their marriage recognized when they returned home. As a result of today’s ruling, however, the marriages entered by same-sex couples in Hawai‘i must be recognized by every other State.

Attorney General Chin further explained “For same-sex couples who married in Hawai‘i and reside here, today’s decision does not alter the recognition of their marriage, as provided in Hawai‘i’s marriage equality act. But the Supreme Court’s decision means that Hawai‘i residents will not lose the protections of marriage when they travel to the mainland.”

Hawai‘i has been involved in the debate over marriage equality for decades. In 1993, the Hawai‘i Supreme Court decided Baehr v. Lewin, which was the first court decision in the country to acknowledge that same-sex couples’ right to marry who they love is a matter of constitutional law. Hawai‘i subsequently recognized same-sex relationships as reciprocal beneficiaries, then later civil unions, and finally marriage in 2013.

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