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For Immediate Release
March 13, 2018

News Release 2018-25

**HAWAII AND MASSACHUSETTS LEAD COALITION IN
DEFENDING CONSTITUTIONALITY OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS**

HONOLULU – Acting Attorney General Russell A. Suzuki and Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey today led a coalition of 17 attorneys general in filing an amicus brief defending the constitutionality of Minnesota’s anti-discrimination law.

The brief was filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in the case of *Telescope Media Group v. Lindsey*. The case was brought by the owners of a videography service who do not want to offer their wedding-related services to same-sex couples as required under the Minnesota public accommodations law. They are challenging the law, claiming it violates their freedom of speech and free exercise of religion.

Acting Attorney General Russell A. Suzuki said, “Discrimination by businesses is counter to Hawaii’s spirit of Aloha. All citizens have a right to fair and equal treatment and this filing reinforces our fight to protect that fundamental right.”

The attorneys general filed the brief in support of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, defending the constitutionality of the Minnesota public accommodations law.

In the brief, the attorneys general write that states across the country have enacted laws to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ people in the commercial marketplace, and that “these laws ensure equal enjoyment of goods and services and combat the severe personal, economic, and social harms caused by discrimination.” The attorneys general argue that, under a long line of Supreme Court precedent, requiring businesses to comply with such laws does not violate the Constitution. The attorneys general further argue that the First Amendment exemption to public accommodations laws sought by the business would dramatically undermine anti-discrimination laws.

The attorneys general write, “Allowing commercial businesses to use the First Amendment as a shield for discriminatory conduct would undermine state civil rights laws and the vital benefits they provide to residents and visitors, leaving behind a

society separate and unequal by law. Many Americans would face exclusion from a host of everyday businesses or, at the very least, the ever-present threat that any business owner could refuse to serve them when they walk in the door - simply because of their sexual orientation, or their race, religion, or gender.”

Joining AG Healey and Acting AG Suzuki in the amicus brief in support of Minnesota are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Washington, D.C.

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