

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
The Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

We write to ask you to formally recognize for all federal purposes the marriages between same-sex couples that have been performed in the State of Wisconsin since a federal district judge invalidated the state's constitutional amendment barring same-sex marriage on June 6. To date, same-sex couples across Wisconsin have received marriage licenses, and officials in counties throughout the state continue to issue licenses to eligible couples. These loving couples have valid marriage licenses and should receive the same federal recognition that all other married Wisconsin couples currently do.

On June 6, U.S. District Court Judge Barbara Crabb ruled that Wisconsin's constitutional and statutory restrictions on marriage for same-sex couples violate the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. She did not immediately stay her decision and, within hours, some county clerks opened their doors to same-sex couples seeking to marry. On Friday, Judge Crabb issued a stay of her decision while the state pursues an appeal, thereby suspending further marriages in the interim.

Following last summer's U.S. Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Windsor*, you have led the federal government's effort to ensure that all lawfully-married same-sex couples have equal access to federal rights and benefits. As a result, couples who had legally married are finally treated equally and are able to access:

- the ability to sponsor a foreign spouse for legal residency in the United States;
- health, workers compensation, retirement and other benefits for the spouse of a federal employee;
- health benefits, spousal ID cards, housing allowances and on-base support services for the spouse of a service member;
- joint federal income tax filings, as well as spousal exemptions from federal taxation of gifts, inheritances and the value of employer-provided spousal health coverage;
- unpaid family and medical leave to care for an ill spouse;
- and hundreds of other rights and benefits.

However, until last week, same-sex couples in Wisconsin were unable to receive these benefits because they could not lawfully marry. Now that Judge Crabb's decision has allowed many of them to obtain marriage licenses, the federal government should provide Wisconsin's married same-sex couples with all of these federal benefits now available to them under the law.

Earlier this year, you made clear that couples who married in Utah and Michigan after federal judges struck down those states' bans are entitled to full federal recognition. We are grateful for this tremendous leadership on behalf of fairness and equality. We ask that you similarly declare that those same-sex couples who married in Wisconsin since the June 6 decision are equally entitled to the federal benefits they deserve.

Sincerely,



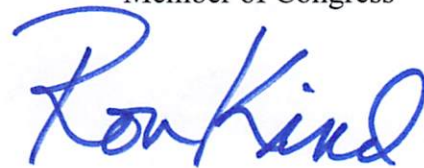
Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress