

## ***Gay and Immigrant Rights Groups Join Forces on Marriage Issue***

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**Highlight:** The president is urged to put on hold cases under consideration by immigration authorities of U.S. citizens who are seeking permanent resident visas, or green cards, for **immigrants** of the same sex they legally married.

### **Body**

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In a letter on Monday to the White House, more than 50 **gay rights** and **immigrant** advocacy **groups** asked President Obama to put a hold on immigration cases involving Americans seeking legal residency visas for foreign-born spouses of the same sex, until the Supreme Court **issues** a significant ruling on **gay marriage** next year.

The **gay** and immigration organizations are **joining forces** on the **marriage issue**, hoping to capitalize on political momentum they gained from the elections, when **gay**, Latino and **immigrant** voters turned out overwhelmingly in support of Mr. Obama.

The **groups** urged the president to "hold in abeyance" cases currently under consideration by federal immigration authorities of United States citizens who are seeking permanent resident visas, known as green cards, for **immigrants** of the same sex they legally married. The Supreme Court ruling is expected in June.

Under the federal Defense of **Marriage** Act, which Congress passed in 1996, a same-sex **marriage** cannot be a valid basis for federal benefits, including immigration documents. For an American who marries an **immigrant** of the opposite sex, obtaining a green card for the spouse is generally a routine and relatively fast procedure. But under the terms of DOMA, as the law is known, Americans cannot obtain green cards, based on their **marriage**, for foreign spouses of the same sex.

The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to take two cases challenging laws that define **marriage** as being only between a man and a woman. The letter from the **rights groups** focused on one of them, a direct challenge to DOMA. The case, United States v. Windsor, concerns a woman in New York, Edith Windsor, who faced a steep tax bill on property she inherited after her same-sex spouse died, which Ms. Windsor would not have to pay if her spouse had been a man.

In January 2011 the Justice Department announced it would no longer defend DOMA in the courts. But the administration has continued to enforce the law and officials have routinely denied green card applications from same-sex couples.

"With no ability to apply for family-based immigration benefits because of DOMA," the **groups** wrote in their letter, "many foreign nationals face the untenable choice" of remaining in the United States without legal papers and "facing the daily fear of deportation," or "leaving the U.S. and their family behind."

## Gay and Immigrant Rights Groups Join Forces on Marriage Issue

The **groups** pointed to a similar hold placed on green card cases by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services when Congress was debating a change in the law allowing widows of American citizens to obtain the visas.

Nine states recognize same-sex **marriages**. But for the time being, an administration official said, DOMA "remains in effect and the Executive Branch will continue to enforce it unless and until Congress repeals it or there a final judicial determination that it is unconstitutional."

- [Romney Says He Would Honor Immigration Reprieves Granted by Obama](#)
- [4 Senators Propose Easing Visa Limits for Highly Skilled](#)
- [Gay Donors, Key Group for Obama, to Plot Strategy in Washington](#)
- [In Heated Primary Fight, Romney Keeps Focus on Obama](#)
- [Republicans' Immigration Bill Blocked by Senate Democrats](#)

## Classification

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