

Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. ends ban on green cards for gay spouses

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USPA News - The U.S. federal government will no longer prevent foreigners who are married to an American citizen of the same sex from obtaining family-based immigrant visas such as a "green card," Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced Monday. The decision stems from last week's landmark Supreme Court ruling that struck down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which had denied more than 1,100 federal benefits to married individuals in same-sex relationships.

It was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in September 1996. "Effective immediately, I have directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to review immigration visa petitions filed on behalf of a same-sex spouse in the same manner as those filed on behalf of an opposite-sex spouse," Napolitano said in a statement released on late Monday. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said the changes would apply for all American citizens who are in a same-sex marriage, even if they now live in a state that does not recognize their same-sex marriage. "USCIS looks to the law of the place where the marriage took place when determining whether it is valid for immigration law purposes," it said. Support for same-sex marriage has increased across the United States in recent years, with now 13 states and the District of Columbia performing them. A Gallup poll in 1996 found that only 27 percent of Americans were in favor of same-sex marriage, but the latest survey conducted last year found that 50 percent of Americans are now in favor of allowing marriages between people of the same gender.

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