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US Supreme Court Removes Federal Ban on Marriage

In a remarkable outcome, the Supreme Court of the United States has today delivered its decision on two same-sex marriage cases, with momentous impacts for lesbian and gay couples.

“This is a fantastic outcome from the US Supreme Court. Lesbian and gay married couples will now have constitutionally-mandated equal treatment in the United States” said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

“The ruling is a pivotal moment in the achievement of equality for lesbian and gay people in the US and the decision will echo across the world. A very strong message of inclusion, value and equality has been sent to lesbian and gay people everywhere. It will support the growing momentum for full constitutional equality for lesbian and gay couples and families in Ireland” said Rose.

The Court decided that the Defence of Marriage Act was unconstitutional. This means that where a US State chooses to recognise a marriage between a lesbian or gay couple, the Federal government cannot treat them any differently opposite sex marriage couples. Prior to this, married lesbian and gay couples were denied Federal level rights including equal treatment in immigration, income tax, inheritance tax and social security protections.

“This outcome is wonderful for lesbian and gay citizens of the US. It is also wonderful news for Irish lesbian and gay people married to US citizens. While the US citizen could move to Ireland on the basis of their marriage, the Irish citizen was unable to move to the US. This judgement now means that Irish spouses of lesbian or gay US citizens will be able to live in the US with their husband or wife” said Rose.

In the second decision the Court decided that a lower court judgement on ‘Prop 8’ should stand, meaning that lesbian and gay couples can get married again in California.

“Ireland has made huge progress in evolving towards civil marriage and full Constitutional equality for lesbian and gay couples. The Constitutional Convention overwhelmingly supported equal marriage which is echoed in public and political support. We are ready to move to the next step of access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples” concluded Rose.

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