



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**\*\*\*\*\* STATEMENT\*\*\*\*\***

## **San Francisco Human Rights Commission Calls SCOTUS Striking Down DOMA and Dismissing Prop. 8 for Lack of Standing a Critical Civil and Human Rights Victory For All People**

**San Francisco, CA-** Today, the Supreme Court of the United States announced its long anticipated rulings striking down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and dismissing Prop. 8 for lack of standing. The High Court's opinion on Prop.8 basically ruled that the sponsors of the ballot referendum passed in November 2008 that banned same-sex marriage in California, did not meet the legal threshold to contest or challenge a lower Court's ruling that struck down the referendum as unconstitutional.

In a 5-4 decision for both opinions, striking down DOMA will extend federal benefits to same-sex couples in states where same-sex marriages are recognized. The SCOTUS' Prop. 8 ruling will allow same-sex marriages to resume in the State of California. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in the majority opinion, "The federal statute is invalid, for no legitimate purpose overcomes the purpose and effect to disparage and to injure those whom the State, by its marriage laws, sought to protect in personhood and dignity. By seeking to displace this protection and treating those persons as living in marriages less respected than others, the federal statute is in violation of the Fifth Amendment."

Theresa Sparks, Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) stated, "Today's rulings are not just a landmark victory for the LGBT community but also advance and solidify equal protection under the law for ALL people as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. This milestone also adheres to the true spirit of ensuring equality for all which remains the cornerstone of our nation's long-standing civil rights movement. As our nation commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the March on Washington, today's rulings resonate the sentiments of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech that speaks to the "riches of freedom and the security of justice" that affords all people the right to freedom of choice in the pursuit of their individual happiness."

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Michael Pappas, SF Human Rights Commissioner and Chair of the agency's LGBT Community Advisory Committee expressed, "This is a critical civil and human rights victory for all people and one that reflects our nation's fortitude to reject an ostensible reincarnation of the doctrine of "separate but equal" on all levels and in particular where it unfairly infringes on what should be an unqualified freedom of choice to marry the person you choose to love. These rulings echo San Francisco's long standing history of inclusion, tolerance and acceptance for all and represent an achievement in human and civil rights for which we all should be proud."

*The San Francisco Human Rights Commission was established in 1964 by City Ordinance and became a Charter Commission in 1990. In 2014 the HRC will celebrate 50 years of distinguished public service in human rights advocacy for the City and County of San Francisco.*

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