

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 1, 2013

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki  
The Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, District of Columbia 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We applauded Wednesday's Supreme Court decision in *U.S. v. Windsor* declaring unconstitutional the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) provision defining a spouse as a person of the opposite sex. The ruling is an historic victory for freedom and equality, and we are glad that all legally married couples across the country will now be accorded full respect under federal law.

We are pleased with your track record of supporting the rights of all who have bravely served in uniform, including your decision to allow a veteran and her same-sex spouse to receive burial benefits in a national veterans' cemetery. We ask that you continue to stand on the side of equality as you reevaluate laws and regulations related to veterans' benefits without the shadow of DOMA.

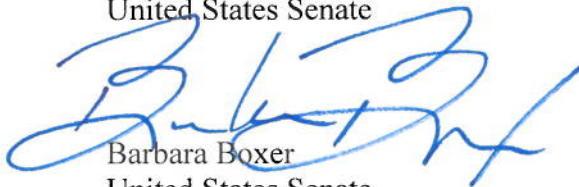
We respectfully request that in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision, the Department of Veterans Affairs grant all available rights and benefits to same-sex couples by recognizing marriages legal in the state of celebration, regardless of the state of residence. We further ask that you speak with your counterparts in the Department of Justice as soon as possible to make a new determination of policy regarding VA benefits based on the location of the marriage.

All of our country's veterans and their spouses deserve no less than full benefits in recognition of their tremendous service and sacrifice. Thank you for your consideration of this letter and your continued service to our country.

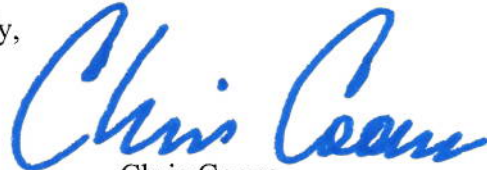
Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate



Chris Coons  
United States Senate



Mark Udall  
United States Senate

*Kirsten E. Gillibrand*

Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senate

*Brian Schatz*

Brian Schatz  
United States Senate

*Sherrod Brown*

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senate

*Chris Murphy*

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senate