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TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

July 26, 2013

The Honorable Tom Corbett
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Corbett:

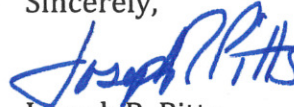
On June 26th, the United States Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which President Bill Clinton signed into law in 1996, after it was passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support in both Houses of Congress. Section 3 defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman for purposes of federal policies and federal law—and left states free to define marriage for state policies and state law. The Court's 5-4 decision now requires the federal government to accept each state's definition of marriage.

The Court did not strike down Section 2 of DOMA, however, which protects states from being forced to recognize relationships between persons of the same sex that are treated as marriage under the laws of *other* states. And Justice Anthony Kennedy, in his majority opinion, was very clear that the "definition and regulation of marriage" remains "within the authority and realm of the separate States."

This is significant to Pennsylvania because, as the Supreme Court has expressed, Pennsylvania has the right to defend its marriage policy, which it has done by defining marriage between one man and one woman as diverse cultures and faiths have done throughout history. The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision in no way impacted the constitutionality of state laws defining marriage; on the contrary, the Court emphasized the state's prerogative to define marriage.

Because Pennsylvania's marriage law is constitutional, the Pennsylvania Attorney General has a sworn duty to defend it. But Attorney General Kathleen Kane has refused to defend the state's current marriage law, placing her personal views over the law of the state and ignoring the duties she was elected to perform. Due to Attorney General's failure to perform her duty, we ask that you ensure that the Pennsylvania's marriage law is both respected and defended.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress