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## WHAT IT MEANS

The Supreme Court victory in *Windsor* striking down the discriminatory federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) affirms that all loving and committed couples who are married deserve equal legal respect and treatment from the federal government. The demise of DOMA marks a turning point in how the United States government treats the relationships of married same-sex couples for federal programs that are linked to being married. At the same time, a turning point is part of a longer journey, not the end of the road. There is much work ahead before same-sex couples living across the nation can enjoy all the same protections as their different-sex counterparts.

### Keep in Mind:

Supreme Court victory in *Windsor* striking down the discriminatory federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) affirms that all loving and committed couples who are married deserve equal legal respect and treatment from the federal government.

### DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE ACT (DOMA)

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was passed by Congress in 1996. It defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman. DOMA also states that states that recognize same-sex marriages are not required to recognize them for federal purposes. This means that same-sex couples who are married in their state may not be recognized as married for federal benefits, taxes, and other programs.

### DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE ACT (DOMA)

The Supreme Court's decision in *Windsor* is a landmark ruling that strikes down the discriminatory federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The Court held that DOMA's definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman is unconstitutional because it discriminates against same-sex couples. This decision means that same-sex couples who are married in their state are now recognized as married for federal purposes. This is a significant step towards equality for all couples.

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American Civil Liberties Union, American Family Association, Family Equality Council, Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances, National Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, Human Rights Campaign, Institute for Legal and Policy Studies, National Center for Lesbian Rights, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, Oberlin, Ohio State University, and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

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