



NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

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Assembly Democrats Praise Governor Paterson's Directive Recognizing Out-of-State Same-Sex Marriages

Statement by NYS Assembly Members Micah Kellner, Daniel O'Donnell, Deborah Glick, Jonathan Bing, James Brennan, Jeffrey Dinowitz, Richard Gottfried, Andrew Hevesi, Sam Hoyt, Ellen Jaffee, Susan John, Barbara Lifton, John McEneny, Felix Ortiz, Naomi Rivera, and Linda Rosenthal (list in formation).

"Earlier this year, New York State's lesbian, gay, and bisexual legislators asked the Governor's office to use its executive powers to apply the marriage recognition rule throughout New York State government and its departments after a February appellate court decision, *Martinez v. County of Monroe*, said that same-sex marriages from other jurisdictions must be recognized in New York. The Governor's staff said they agreed and were working towards making these changes.

"Yesterday, the results of this were made public when it was announced that earlier this month Governor David Paterson, through his Counsel David Nocenti, directed all state agencies to begin the process of updating the way New York treats same-sex married couples.

"Governor Paterson's actions demonstrate the sincerity of his commitment to equality for same-sex New York couples. We thank him for his leadership.

"While the work of implementing these changes still lies ahead, we are confident that the Governor and his staff are as determined as we are to ensure that gay and lesbian New Yorkers who get married are treated just like any other married couple.

"This is a huge victory and an exciting first step towards true equality – but there is still much more to do. It is foolish and wrong that New Yorkers should be forced to travel to San Francisco or Halifax in order to have their rights respected in Buffalo or Brooklyn.

"The Assembly passed its Marriage Equality bill last year and the drumbeat towards marriage equality is loud and clear. Polls show that New Yorkers believe in civil rights, agree with marriage equality, and oppose discrimination. It is a matter of fairness that same-sex couples should be able to celebrate their unions at home, surrounded by friends and family, just like heterosexual couples are able to do. The Governor's actions have brought that dream one step closer to reality."

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