

## U. S. Government Recognizes Michigan Gay Marriages

By Administrator

Friday, 28 March 2014 10:52 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 10:52

---

DETROIT (AP) — Attorney General Eric Holder on Friday extended federal recognition to the marriages of about 300 same-sex couples that took place in Michigan before a federal appeals court put those unions on hold.

Holder's action will enable the government to extend eligibility for federal benefits to the Michigan couples who married Saturday, which means they can file federal taxes jointly, get Social Security benefits for spouses and request legal immigration status for partners, among other benefits. The attorney general said the families should not be asked to endure uncertainty regarding their benefits while courts decide the issue of same-sex marriage in Michigan. Holder did the same thing in Utah, where more than 1,000 same-sex couples got married before the U.S. Supreme Court put those unions on hold in January after a federal judge overturned the conservative state's same-sex marriage ban in December.

Holder's decision came a week after U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman in Detroit struck down the gay marriage ban and two days after Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder called last weekend's marriages legal but said Michigan won't recognize them.

Donna DeMarco and Lisa Ulrey were among the dozens of couples who married Saturday in Oakland County, northwest of Detroit.

DeMarco's reaction to Friday's federal recognition: "Cool."

"That's a major step," DeMarco said. "The federal government is making great strides with recognizing same-sex marriage. It's time for Michigan to get out of its prehistoric age and get with the times. When you have a state government that's full of hate and straddles political lines and doesn't recognize that people are people, it affects a lot of people."

DeMarco said she and Ulrey have not yet applied for joint Social Security benefits.

"I guess we can now," she said, adding that the couple will jointly file federal taxes next year.

## U. S. Government Recognizes Michigan Gay Marriages

By Administrator

Friday, 28 March 2014 10:52 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 10:52

---

Oakland County was one of four that took the extraordinary step of granting licenses Saturday just hours before the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati ordered a temporary halt. The stay was extended indefinitely Tuesday.

The federal appeals court acted on a request from Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, who defended Michigan's same-sex marriage ban.

Friedman's ruling came in a federal lawsuit filed in 2012 by April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse, two Detroit-area nurses who are raising three children with special needs. DeBoer and Rowse have said they sued because they were barred from jointly adopting each other's children. Joint adoption is reserved for married heterosexual couples in Michigan.

"I think it's spectacular that our federal government has chosen to acknowledge the validity of these marriages, and accord the respect and dignity these couples and their families deserve," said attorney Dana Nessel, who represented DeBoer and Rowse.

Snyder, a Republican, acknowledged Wednesday that same-sex couples "had a legal marriage." But because of the court's stay, he added, the gay marriage ban has been restored. That closed the door, at least for now, to certain state benefits reserved solely for married couples. The American Civil Liberties Union has said more than 1,000 Michigan laws are tied to marriage.

Bill Freeman, pastor of Harbor Unitarian Universalist Congregation church in western Michigan's Muskegon, responded to Friday's news with a loud "Yeah!"

"I think it's great. I think it's wonderful. I think it's glorious," he said. "Even the governor of Michigan says the marriages are legal, but is not going to let them be enforceable in Michigan — and that's crazy.

## U. S. Government Recognizes Michigan Gay Marriages

By Administrator

Friday, 28 March 2014 10:52 - Last Updated Friday, 28 March 2014 10:52

---

&quot;These guys ought to be able to get their Social Security cards and have the same benefits just like any other heterosexually married couple.&quot;

Freeman officiated dozen of weddings Saturday after marriage licenses were issued by the Muskegon County clerk's office.

Seventeen states and Washington, D.C., issue licenses for same-sex marriages. Since December, bans on gay marriage also have been overturned by courts in Texas, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Virginia, but appeals have put those cases on hold.