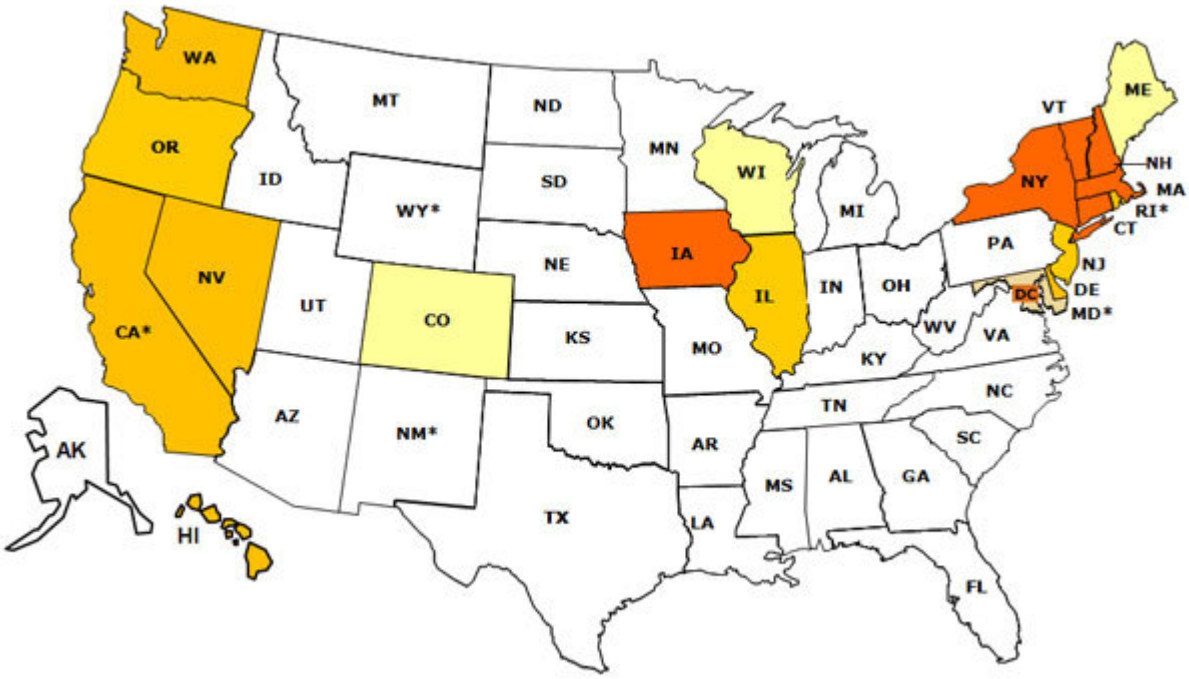
HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

1640 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
web: www.hrc.org
phone: 202/628-4160
fax: 202/347-5323

Marriage Equality & Other Relationship Recognition Laws



State issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples (6 states and the District of Columbia): *Connecticut (2008), District of Columbia (2010), Iowa (2009), Massachusetts (2004), New Hampshire (2010), New York (2011, effective July 24, 2011) and Vermont (2009).*

State recognizes marriages by same-sex couples legally entered into in another jurisdiction (1 state): *Maryland (2010).*

Statewide law providing the equivalent of state-level spousal rights to same-sex couples within the state (9 states and Washington, DC): *California* (domestic partnerships, 1999, expanded in 2005), Delaware (civil unions, effective Jan. 1, 2012), Hawaii (civil unions, effective Jan. 1, 2012) Illinois (civil unions, 2011), Nevada (domestic partnerships, 2009), New Jersey (civil unions, 2007), Oregon (domestic partnerships, 2008), Rhode Island (civil unions, 2011) and Washington (domestic partnerships, 2007/2009).*

Statewide law providing some statewide spousal rights to same-sex couples within the state (3 states): *Colorado (designated beneficiaries, 2009), Maine (2004), and Wisconsin (domestic partnerships, 2009).*

* California: Same-sex marriages that took place between June 16, 2008 and Nov. 4, 2008 continue to be defined as marriages. On Oct. 12, 2009, Gov. Schwarzenegger signed into law a bill that recognizes out-of-jurisdiction same-sex marriages that occurred between the June to Nov.2008 time frame as marriages in California, and all other out-of-jurisdiction same-sex marriages as domestic partnerships.

* Maine: Gov. John Baldacci signed marriage equality legislation May 6, 2009. However, the new law was repealed by a ballot measure in November 2009.

* Maryland: does not have a registry but does provide certain benefits to statutorily defined domestic partners. Also, in 2010, the Maryland Attorney General issued an advisory opinion declaring that the state can recognize out-of-jurisdiction marriages.

*New Mexico: In Jan. 2011, the New Mexico Attorney General issued an advisory opinion declaring that the state can recognize out-of-jurisdiction same-sex marriages. At this time, it is unclear what affect this opinion will have.

* Wyoming: On June 6, 2011, the Wyoming Supreme Court decided *Christensen v. Christensen*, ruling that Wyoming trial courts have the ability to hear divorce proceedings terminating same-sex marriages created in other jurisdictions.