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# PRESS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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## **Marriage Equality USA Calls on Canada to Affirm the Legal Marriages of All Same-Sex Couples**

**New York/San Francisco · January 12, 2012** — Marriage Equality USA (MEUSA) is calling on Canadian Department of Justice to renounce its statement in court that many non-resident gay and lesbian couples married in Canada are not legally married after all. Government attorneys argued that marriages are only valid if the couple can also marry in their home country. This legal position taken by government lawyers at the trial court level has created uncertainty and confusion for couples around the world, and MEUSA is calling on the Canadian government to immediately affirm the legality of all weddings performed in Canada in accordance with Canadian law.

"We were legally married in 2007 in Niagara Falls. We are now relying on the Canadian government to uphold its legal vows to us," said Scott Hester-Johnson, a US citizen who married his husband in Niagara Falls, Ontario. "When my husband Derrick and I exchanged vows in Niagara Falls, the Canadian government also vowed to us to honor and respect our legal marriage."

"Canada has been a beacon to the world until now, and up to a third of the same-sex couples married in Canada are from other countries," said Brian Silva, Interim Executive Director, Marriage Equality New York. "Canada needs to correct its course immediately and make the strongest statement possible that all marriages will be respected equally."

"Legally married couples woke up around the world today to hear the validity of their marriages was being needlessly and wrongfully called into question. We call on Canada's Department of Justice to end this confusion today, and restore Canada's status as a world leader in equality and fairness for loving couples everywhere," said Stuart Gaffney, Media Director, Marriage Equality USA.

*Founded in 2001, Marriage Equality USA is a national grassroots organization whose mission is to secure legally-recognized civil marriage equality for all, at the federal and state level, without regard to gender identity or sexual orientation. For more information go to [www.marriageequality.org](http://www.marriageequality.org).*

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