

Timeline of Same-Sex Marriage Laws – Student Handout

1969 – Police enter the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, New York City, on a routine raid aimed at arresting gay patrons and encounter violent resistance from the gay community. The event, known as the Stonewall riots, marks the beginning of the modern gay rights movement.

1970 – Jack Baker and Michael McConnell become the first same-sex couple to apply for a marriage license in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Their application is rejected and they lose their appeal.

1973 – Maryland becomes the first state to ban same-sex marriage.

1996 – President Bill Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act into law. DOMA says that neither the federal government nor states have to recognize same-sex marriages that were performed in another state, cutting off same-sex couples' access to marriage benefits in many states.

2000 – Vermont becomes the first state to legalize civil unions between same-sex partners.

2001 – The Netherlands becomes the first country to legalize same-sex marriage.

2003 – The Federal Marriage Amendment is introduced to the House of Representatives. The amendment would add language to the Constitution stating that marriage should only occur between a man and a woman.

2004-2006 – 23 states ban same-sex marriage.

2008 – California bans same-sex marriage by popular vote on Proposition 8, a measure on the state ballot. The following year, the California state Supreme Court upholds that decision.

2011 – President Barack Obama tells the Department of Justice to stop defending DOMA in court, stating that it is unconstitutional.

2012 – Obama publicly states his support for same-sex marriage. The same year, three states—Maine, Maryland and Washington—become the first to legalize same-sex marriage by popular vote. A federal appeals court rules that California's Proposition 8 is unconstitutional.

2013 – Several Supreme Court decisions remove barriers for same-sex couples. In *Windsor v. U.S.*, the Supreme Court strikes down Section 3 of DOMA, ensuring that the federal government must recognize same-sex marriages that have been performed in states where they are legal. In *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, SCOTUS rules that there is no legal standing to defend Prop 8, effectively allowing same-sex couples to marry in California. Seven states legalize same-sex marriage.

2014 – The U.S. Supreme Court decides not to rule on whether states can ban same-sex marriage. Immediately after the announcement, same-sex marriages begin in five states. Same-sex marriage is now legal in 30 states.

2015 – SCOTUS hears arguments in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, a case that could decide the legality of same-sex marriage nationwide. A ruling in that case is expected in late June or early July.