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February 26, 2013

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the Member of Congress representing California's 41st Congressional District, I thank you for filing a brief on behalf of the United States in *United States v. Windsor* and urge you to file an amicus brief for the United States in *Hollingsworth v. Perry*.

I have a unique perspective on the discrimination and harm occasioned by prejudice. During World War II, the United States Government removed all four of my grandparents, along with my parents, from their respective homes and sent them to Japanese American Internment camps. After the war, my family settled in Riverside County and rebuilt their lives. Despite the injustice they suffered, my parents raised my brothers and me to believe in the promise of America, that all of us are equal under the law.

In addition to being Japanese-American, I am proudly and openly gay. My road to Congress was not an easy one. When I ran for Congress in 1994, my LGBT status was a detriment to my efforts. Four years ago, 64.3% of Riverside County, where my District is located, voted for Proposition 8. But this past November, I ran again as a candidate for Congress, and the people of Riverside overwhelmingly elected me.

I am the first and only openly LGBT member of California's 55-member Congressional Delegation and the first and only openly LGBT person of color to serve in either House. Despite the progress we have made and the historic significance of my election, there remains much to do before LGBT Americans achieve the promise of America.

My district includes thousands of loving gay and lesbian couples, who are not able to marry due to Proposition 8. They are our families, our friends and neighbors. They are doctors, veterans, teachers, gardeners, firefighters and police officers. They are Americans. Every day that they cannot enjoy the same rights and obligations enjoyed by other Americans, they and their families suffer.

On behalf of my constituents and myself, I am grateful for the brief in *Windsor* and the United States' position that heightened scrutiny should apply under the United States Constitution to all laws that classify individuals based on whether they are gay or lesbian.

(continued...)

I strongly and respectfully ask that the United States provide an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in *Perry* to explain how heightened scrutiny, the standard that the United States urges be applied to the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, applies to Proposition 8. A brief by the United States will assist the Supreme Court to see that Proposition 8 fails heightened scrutiny and does not further any proper governmental objectives.

It is critical that the Supreme Court find Proposition 8 to be unconstitutional. It is time for marriage equality. And although Federal law provides numerous protections for married couples, most of the LGBT couples in California and their families may not be able to enjoy the benefits of those protections even when DOMA is found unconstitutional unless they are able to marry.

Thank you Mr. President.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Takano", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Takano
Member of Congress