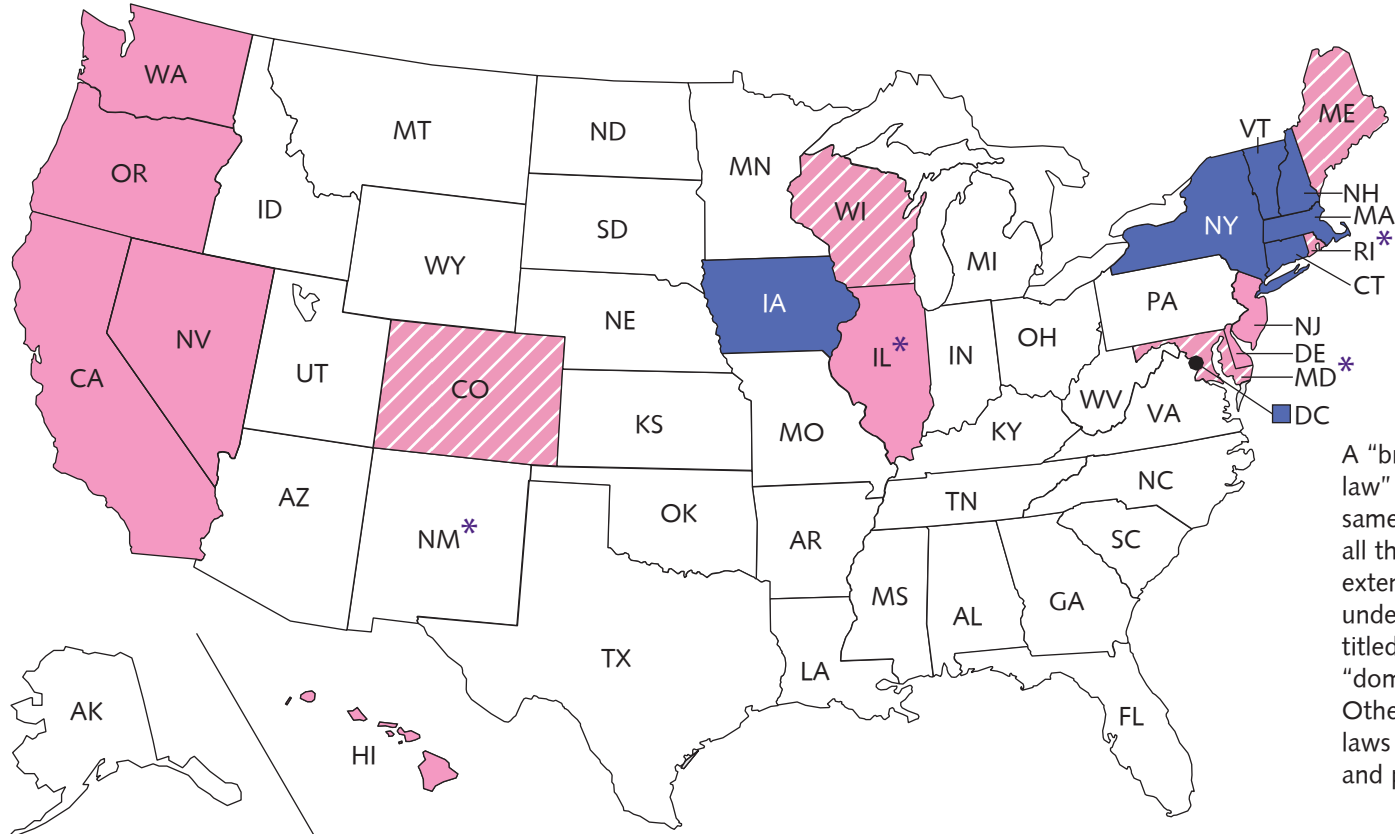


# Relationship Recognition for Same-Sex Couples in the U.S.

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A "broad relationship recognition law" is one that extends to same-sex couples all or nearly all the rights and responsibilities extended to married couples under state law, whether titled a "civil union" or "domestic partnership" law. Other relationship recognition laws offer more limited rights and protections.

- States with full marriage equality**  
 Massachusetts (2004); Connecticut (2008); Iowa (2009); Vermont (2009)<sup>1</sup>;  
 New Hampshire (2010); District of Columbia (2010)<sup>2</sup>; New York (2011)
- States with broad relationship recognition laws**  
**civil unions:** Vermont (2000); New Jersey (2007); Illinois (2011); Delaware (2012);  
 Hawaii (2012)<sup>5</sup>  
**domestic partnerships:** California (2005)<sup>4</sup>; Oregon (2008); Washington (2008); Nevada (2009)
- States with limited relationship recognition laws**  
**designated beneficiaries:** Colorado (2009)  
**domestic partnerships:** Rhode Island (2001); Maine (2004); Maryland (2008)<sup>3</sup>;  
 Wisconsin (2009)
- States that recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states**  
 Rhode Island (2007); Maryland (2010); New Mexico (2011); Illinois (2011)

All dates shown are effective dates, not dates of passage.

<sup>1</sup>VT will honor existing civil unions but will not issue new licenses. Civil unions will not automatically convert to marriages.

<sup>2</sup>DC will continue to honor and issue domestic partner licenses and will convert domestic partnerships to marriages for those who wish.

<sup>3</sup>In 2008, MD created domestic partnerships, but it does not maintain a registry. In 2010, the attorney general determined that out-of-state marriages should be recognized.

<sup>4</sup>CA recognizes same-sex marriages legally registered in or out of CA prior to Nov. 5, 2008 as marriages, and those registered out of CA on or after Nov. 5, 2008 as domestic partnerships.

<sup>5</sup>In 1997, HI passed a limited "reciprocal beneficiary" law that will remain in effect after the civil unions law goes into effect.

