

## IAFL Press Release: Against restriction of US G-4 Visas to married persons

### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### IAFL and AAML Joint Position Statement on US G-4 Visas

The International Academy of Family Lawyers and the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers condemn the decision of the US State Department to restrict G-4 visas to married persons and to end, as of October 1, 2018, the previous policy allowing same-sex domestic partners to qualify.

The G-4 visa is used by foreign diplomats and employees of international organizations to live in the US. Since 2009 it has been necessary for such persons to provide evidence of marriage in order for their immediate family members to qualify for G-4 status. Recognizing that marriage for same-sex couples is allowed in only a small number of countries, the US has until now extended G-4 status to same-sex domestic partners. The recent directive by the State Department brings an immediate halt to that valuable accommodation for non-married but coupled diplomats and employees.

The effect of this decision is to discriminate against same-sex couples from countries that do not allow or recognize same-sex marriage. It will effectively prevent members of the LGBTI community from certain countries from living and working in the US and will have a significant negative impact on the diversity of organizations, including the United Nations. Moreover, it puts at risk diplomats and employees of international organizations who could be discriminated against, abused and/or criminally prosecuted by their own governments if they married in the US in an effort to maintain their G-4 status. This new rule is a deeply troublesome and retrograde step which erodes the civil rights gains of recent years.

Both the International Academy of Family Lawyers and the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers call for this decision to be immediately reversed. Both organizations reaffirm their support of efforts towards full equality of the LGBTI community throughout the world and the end to rules that unfairly discriminate against such individuals and, in many countries, criminalize countless couples because of the ones they love.

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recognised by their peers as the most experienced and skilled family law specialists in their respective countries. See [www.iafl.com](http://www.iafl.com)

Recipients of this release are urged to share this statement with your organisations, colleagues and through social media.

**ENDS**

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