

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Puerto Rico Amends Law Following Supreme Court Same-Sex Ruling

VIC News / **Published On June 29, 2015 09:48 AM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Moments after the U.S. Supreme Court's [landmark ruling in favor of same-sex marriage](#) on Friday, Puerto Rico legislators moved swiftly to approve legislation extending marriage rights in the commonwealth of 3.6 million, according to the Associated Press.

Following the legislature's lead, Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla signed an executive order requiring that all government agencies become compliant with the law within 15 days. As a result of the executive order, Puerto Rico's Health Department is expected to start issuing marriage licenses sometime in July.

PR's Justice Secretary Cesar Miranda, who said he was not sure that the ruling meant that same-sex Puerto Rican couples could now adopt, praised the court ruling as "a huge step in the quest for equal rights. You cannot deny people the right to love," he said, according to the AP.

Similar legislative action will be taken in the Virgin Islands so that the territory could fall in line with the high court's ruling, and local courts are already signaling their willingness to abide by the law, with V.I. Superior Court Presiding Judge Michael Dunston making known over the weekend that they will comply.

In Puerto Rico, several same-sex couples had filed a lawsuit before the Supreme Court ruling that challenged local laws prohibiting same-sex marriage from being recognized on the island. However, after an initial fight, the island's Justice Department announced that it would no longer defend the laws, and the lawsuit was placed on hold pending the Supreme Court's ruling.