IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA SOUTHERN DIVISION

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JAMES N. STRAWSER, et al.,
Plaintiffs,
v.
LUTHER STRANGE, in his official capacity as Attorney General for the State of Alabama, <i>et al.</i> ,
Defendants.

Civil Action No. 14-0424-CG-C

PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR CLARIFICATION

While the majority of Alabama's probate court judges are currently issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, there remain several who profess confusion about their obligations. Plaintiffs therefore move this Court for an order to clarify for Alabama's probate court judges that the preliminary injunction, Doc. 123, is currently in effect and binding upon all probate court judges. In support of this motion, Plaintiffs state the following:

1. On May 21, 2015, this Court issued a preliminary injunction requiring all probate judges in the state to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples on the same terms as such licenses are issued to opposite-sex couples. *See* Doc. 123 at 13. In accordance with the preliminary-injunction order, all of Alabama's probate court judges were served with that order. *See* Docs. 126, 126-1, 137, 137-1.

2. The preliminary injunction was stayed by the Court "until the Supreme Court issues its ruling" in "*Obergefell v. Hodges* and related cases." *See* Doc. 123 at

14 (footnote omitted). The United States Supreme Court issued its ruling on June 26. *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. ____ (2015). Accordingly, this Court's preliminary injunction is now in effect.

3. Following the decision in *Obergefell*, Plaintiffs' class counsel began receiving reports of various county probate court judges who were continuing to enforce Alabama's now-invalidated laws barring same-sex couples from marriage by refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples on the same terms as such licenses are issued to opposite-sex couples. Consequently, counsel sent an e-mail to Defendants' counsel seeking their assistance in notifying all probate court judges of their obligation under the preliminary injunction to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples immediately. The e-mail, in turn, was distributed to all probate judges on June 29 at 10 a.m. *See* Exhibit 1 (e-mail from Plaintiff Class's counsel and response from Ken Webb).

4. A memorandum advising "that probate judges begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in the same manner and pursuant to the same requirements applied to traditional couples," was also distributed to the probate court judges by the Association of County Commissions of Alabama. *See* Exhibit 2. *See also* June 29 ACCA Update, available at

<u>http://acca.informz.net/informzdataservice/onlineversion/ind/bWFpbGluZ2luc3Rhb</u> <u>mNlaWQ9NDQ10TA4NyZzdWJzY3JpYmVyaWQ90DI20DI2MDI3</u> (last visited July 1, 2015).

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5. Accordingly, probate judges in most Alabama counties are now complying with this Court's May 21, 2015, injunction and issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on the same terms as such licenses are issued to opposite-sex couples.

6. Probate judges in a few counties, however, are erroneously maintaining that the Court's May 21, 2015, Order is stayed and that the preliminary injunction is not yet in effect. For example, Tuscaloosa County probate court judge W. Hardy McCollum is currently issuing marriage licenses to opposite-sex couples but not to same-sex couples. *See* Declaration of Jennifer Kenney, Exhibit 3.

7. An order clarifying that the preliminary injunction in the Court's May 21, 2015, Order is in effect and binding on all probate court judges is needed to bring about statewide compliance with the Court's orders.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs move this Court for an order stating that the preliminary injunction order, Doc. 123, is in full effect and binding on all Alabama probate court judges and requires immediate compliance.

Respectfully Submitted,

NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS

By: /s/ Shannon P. Minter

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* Appearing *pro hac vice* ** Motion for admission *pro hac vice* forthcoming

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court by using the CM/ECF system on July 1, 2015. I certify that service will be accomplished by the CM/ECF system to the following parties:

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