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October 17, 2014

\*\*\*\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*\*\*\*

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**The Federal District Court Issues a Preliminary Injunction Allowing Same Sex Couples to Marry in Wyoming**

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - The State of Utah and the State of Oklahoma defined marriage as only between a man and a woman.  The laws of these states were challenged in the federal courts.  On appeal, in each case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit ruled that the laws of Utah and Oklahoma violated the U.S. Constitution.  Utah and Oklahoma appealed these decisions to the United States Supreme Court.  The United States Supreme Court declined to hear these appeals.  Wyoming was not a party to these proceedings and Wyoming’s statute was not challenged.

Wyoming has a statute defining marriage as between a man and a woman.  Unless a statute is challenged and determined to be unconstitutional by a court, it remains in effect.  The Governor has no authority to invalidate a Wyoming statute and has an obligation to defend the laws of Wyoming.

Plaintiffs brought an action in the federal District Court for Wyoming, asking the Court to rule Wyoming’s statute also violates the U.S. Constitution.

Today, the federal district court has issued a preliminary injunction in the matter of Guzzo v. Mead. This decision allows same-sex couples to marry in Wyoming.  The Attorney General, after reviewing the ruling of the federal district court, has advised that an appeal to the very court that ruled these laws unconstitutional, an opinion that the Supreme Court declined to review, would be unlikely to succeed.

“This result is contrary to my personal beliefs and those of many others.  As in all matters, I respect the role of the courts and the ruling of the Court,” said Governor Mead.

There are complicated legal questions between the state and federal court system.  The plaintiffs have also filed a state court case, which is still active, although any decision by that court would not change the right of same-sex couples to marry.

“While this is not the result I and others would have hoped, I recognize people have different points of view and I hope all citizens agree, we are bound by the law,” said Governor Mead.

The federal court’s order, which will come into effect no later than Thursday, October 23, 2014, at 5:00 p.m., allows same-sex couples to marry in Wyoming. The District Court suspended its order to permit the State of Wyoming to appeal its decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. The Attorney General will file notice with the court that the State will not appeal before that date.

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