



Dozens of gay couples get married in Hawaii

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PHOTO: [Jonipher Kwong weds Chris Nelson in Hawaii's first same-sex marriage](#) (Twitter: [@neilabercrombie](#))

MAP: [Hawaii](#)

Dozens of same-sex couples, led by a gay minister and his long-time partner, have been married in Hawaii.

The weddings took place within minutes of a new law taking effect after Hawaii became the 15th US state to legalise gay marriage.

Hawaii's Governor Neil Abercrombie watched as Jonipher Kwong and Chris Nelson became the first gay couple to tie the knot.

The ceremony was at the Honolulu's First Unitarian Church where Reverend Kwong is a minister and a vocal advocate for the new law.

He says he has waited for 15 years to marry his partner. "It felt like we were actually first-class citizens. We're both still riding cloud nine at this point," Reverend Kwong said.

"I've done many weddings for other couples but didn't realise how profound it would be for me.

"At the end of the evening I was speechless to be part of that historic moment, not just for us but those who will come after.

"I also felt a little sad that some of the people who came before were not able to complete marriage and see it in their lifetime."

An employee from the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel in Honolulu says between 30 and 40 same-sex couples were married at the hotel with ceremonies starting just after midnight (local time).

Governor Abercrombie signed legislation last month extending marriage rights to same-sex couples after 20 years of protracted legal and political argument.