

Primary Sources

Associated Press. First Same-Sex Marriage Licenses Issued in Massachusetts. 17 May 2004, <https://newsroom.ap.org/editorial-photos-videos/search?query=Cambridge%20City%20Hall%20on%20May%2017,%202004&mediaType=photo&st=keyword>.

Taken on May 17, 2004, the day the Goodridge ruling took effect, this photo was meant for the general American public. Its purpose was to visually document an unprecedented historical moment from an observational, photojournalistic point of view. This source is important because it serves as undeniable visual proof of the successful reform finally taking effect in the real world.

Clinton, William J. "Statement on Same-Gender Marriage." The American Presidency Project, 20 Sept. 1996, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-same-gender-marriage>.

Written during the 1996 election season, this statement addressed Congress and the voting public. Its purpose was to politically justify signing a discriminatory bill, representing the point of view of a sitting President balancing reelection with a divisive cultural issue. It is important because it highlights the highest level of government actively endorsing the conservative "reaction" against LGBTQ+ rights.

Goodridge v. Department of Public Health. 440 Mass. 309, 798 N.E.2d 941. Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. 2003. Justia,

<https://law.justia.com/cases/massachusetts/supreme-court/2003/440-mass-309-2003.html>.

Written in 2003 during the ongoing LGBTQ+ legal fight, this judicial ruling was directed at Massachusetts lawmakers and the national legal community. Its purpose was to formally declare that denying same-sex marriage violates the state constitution, reflecting a strict civil rights and equal protection point of view. It is highly important as the monumental "reform" victory, marking the first time a US state supreme court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage.

U.S. Congress, House. Defense of Marriage Act. HR 3396. 104th Congress. 1996. Congress.gov, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3396/text>.

Passed in 1996 amidst a conservative backlash over potential same-sex marriage in Hawaii, this document was aimed at the American public and state governments. Its purpose was to legally restrict marriage to opposite-sex couples from a dominant bipartisan, traditionalist point of view. This is crucial because it represents the central "reaction" that blocked equal rights and sparked the LGBTQ+ legal reform movement.

Secondary Sources

"Goodridge v. Department of Public Health." Lambda Legal,

<https://lambdalegal.org/case/goodridge-v-department-of-public-health/>.

Written as a modern retrospective for students and legal researchers, this webpage's purpose is to educate the public on the long-term strategy used to defeat marriage bans. It uses a pro-LGBTQ+ rights point of view to highlight the resilience of civil rights lawyers and the plaintiffs. It is important because it breaks down exactly how the state-level reform was achieved step-by-step in response to DOMA.

"United States v. Windsor." Oyez, Chicago-Kent College of Law,
www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-307. Accessed 29 May 2026.

This secondary source provides a comprehensive overview of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), explaining its passage in 1996 and its legal mechanisms that defined marriage federally as only between a man and a woman. I used this source to establish the foundational background and historical context of what DOMA legally did. This information helped prove the "reaction" part of my thesis by clearly demonstrating how the federal government intervened to deny LGBTQ+ couples legal recognition and benefits.