

**News and Current Events :: NY recognizes Canadian same-sex "marriages"**

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ALBANY, N.Y. -- Same-sex marriages performed in Canada are as valid to New York state's largest public employee pension fund as the U.S. weddings of heterosexuals, state Comptroller Alan Hevesi said.

In an advisory decision released Wednesday, Hevesi said New York state court rulings and a March 2004 opinion by state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer dictate that full benefits be extended to the partner of a public employee if the couple has been married in Canada.

Court rulings starting in June 2003 have validated same-sex marriages in six Canadian provinces, including Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. Judges have ruled that to not let same-sex partners marry violates their rights under Canada's constitution.

Hevesi was asked by an Albany-area state worker, Mark Daigneault, whether Daigneault's partner of 10 years would qualify for his pension benefits if the two are married in Canada. Hevesi said he would.

"This was absolutely clear," Hevesi said. "The law was clear."