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BLOG BRIEFING ROOM**Boehner should defend same-sex marriage ban, says Santorum**

By Michael O'Brien - 02/25/11 07:45 AM ET

One possible Republican presidential candidate is putting pressure on House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) to defend in court the federal law that bans the recognition of gay marriage.

Former Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), a social conservative and dark-horse presidential possibility, said the Speaker needs to step forward after President Obama's [decision to direct the Justice Department to drop its defense](#) of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) from judicial challenges.

Santorum [tweeted Friday morning](#):

Time for Speaker Boehner to defend DOMA <http://www.nationalreview.com/bench-memos/260615/house-intervention-doma-cases-ed-whelan>



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Obama abandoned defending DOMA, the 1990s law that allows states and the federal government to ignore same-sex marriages and civil unions in other states, in his latest move to expand the gay community's rights since taking office.

Attorney General Eric Holder said in his letter to Congress announcing the shift, though, that members of Congress could step forward to defend DOMA in court if they wish.

Boehner did not condemn Obama's move outright, though his spokesman said earlier this week that the timing

was inappropriate for the president to drop its defense of DOMA.

"While Americans want Washington to focus on creating jobs and cutting spending, the president will have to explain why he thinks now is the appropriate time to stir up a controversial issue that sharply divides the nation," [spokesman Michael Steel told TalkingPointsMemo](#).

Social conservatives in the Republican 2012 field [stepped up their criticism of the DOMA decision](#) on Thursday, condemning Obama for paving the way for expanded same-sex marriage rights.

But the pressure on Boehner — some friendly fire in the GOP — is the first of its kind from a presidential candidate, and could shape the relationship between the highest-ranking elected Republican in government now (Boehner) and the Republican presidential field, which the Speaker has said is wide open.

Source:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/146067-santorum-pressures-boehner-to-step-up-on-same-sex-marriage>

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