



Lungren criticizes 'Defense of Marriage' decision, warns of oversight

By Pete Kasperowicz - 02/28/11 02:51 PM ET

Rep. Dan Lungren (R-Calif.), the sixth-ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, said the Obama administration's decision to no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act is a "dereliction of duty," and indicated that congressional oversight may be coming.

"It is beyond disappointment," Lungren said on the House floor Monday. "I believe it is a dereliction of duty. To somehow now find that there is no constitutional basis for defending that law is incredible, and I think regrettable, and I think we ought to look into it."

The Defense of Marriage Act prohibits the government from recognizing same-sex marriages, and was signed into law by former President Clinton. The Obama administration last week said it believes the law is unconstitutional, and Republicans said the decision smacked of politics.

On Monday Lungren echoed that charge, and said it is the Attorney General's job to defend all laws, regardless of their personal views, just as he did as California's Attorney General.

"Having served in that office in California, I can tell you I defended laws that I disagreed with," he said. "I defended laws that I had voted against, and I thought it was my solemn obligation to uphold the Constitution and the laws duly enacted in my state, just as I believe the Attorney General of the United States has that obligation on the federal level."

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