

## American-Brazilian Gay Couple Asks Brazil Help So They Can Live in the US

Contributed by Newsroom  
Friday, 07 March 2008

A same-sex couple, legally married in the state of Massachusetts, United States, three years ago, is urging Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Foreign Minister Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim to raise the issue of the couple's forced separation during a meeting next week with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Timothy J. Coco and Genésio J. Oliveira Jr. were forcibly separated last August when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ordered Oliveira to leave the country after a five-year battle to obtain legal status.

The couple this week filed an "I-130 Petition for Alien Relative" - the same mechanism married heterosexual couples use to gain recognition for immigrant spouses. DHS is expected to deny the petition on Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) grounds. DOMA is a 1996 law that prohibits federal recognition of same-sex marriage.

"I am asking my government, which apparently recognizes my relationship since it permits my spouse to emigrate to Brazil, to support one of its citizens and take the U.S. to task for its inhumanity and mean-spiritedness in this matter.

"My spouse is unable to move to Brazil since he is the primary caregiver for his 82-year-old mother who suffers from a number of health and vision ailments," wrote Oliveira in letters being distributed to Lula, Amorim, Rice, President George W. Bush, Brazilian Ambassador to the U.S. Antonio Patriota and U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Clifford Sobel.

Rice is traveling to Brazil and Chile from March 13 to 15. She is scheduled to meet with Lula and Amorim in the Brazilian capital of Brasília.

"I am cognizant of the many issues that need to be addressed with the United States of America during the secretary's brief visit, but I pray you will raise my issue and urge the U.S. to grant me a visa to join my spouse and help with the care of my mother-in-law.," concluded Oliveira.