

Ian Tapu to Speak at Lavender Law 2026 on Marriage Equality and the Legacy of the Insular Cases

Events

07.07.26

Ian Tapu will present “*Where Marriage Equality is Not Legal in America: The Legacy of the Insular Cases*” at the [2026 Lavender Law Conference & Career Fair](#), hosted by the LGBTQ+ Bar in Chicago on July 14, 2026. The panel is presented by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)’s LGBTQ Network as part of the conference’s Intersectional Justice & Community Rooted Lawyering theme.

- Examine why *Obergefell v. Hodges* does not currently extend marriage equality to American Samoa, the one U.S. jurisdiction where same-sex couples cannot obtain a marriage license.
- Trace the legal doctrine of the Insular Cases, the early 20th-century Supreme Court decisions that continue to shape how and whether constitutional rights apply in U.S. territories.
- Discuss the enduring consequences of this framework, including unequal citizenship status and the discretion it affords territorial governments to decline enforcement of certain constitutional rulings.
- Explore what a century of partial reform in Puerto Rico, Guam, and other territories suggests about the path toward full constitutional protection for American Samoa.

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