



## [Senate Measure Gives Rights to Widows of Citizens](#)

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In a long-overdue move, the Senate last week approved a law that would stop the so-called "widows penalty" in immigration situations. Until now, if an immigrant had an application for permanent residency on file based on marriage to a U.S. citizen, and the citizen died within the first two years of the marriage, the application was annulled and the immigrant was deported.

This seems especially harsh treatment to an immigrant who has just lost his or her newlywed spouse to a tragic death. To have to deal not only with the personal loss but also with the trauma of having to leave the country is just too great a burden.

The new law, expected to be approved by President Obama, would allow the immigrant to submit his or her own petition for residency within two years of the spouse's death. The immigrant must not have remarried and must still prove that the marriage was entered into in good-faith.

The law would be retroactive, and would apply to any immigrant whose citizen spouse died less than two years after the marriage, regardless of the date. The immigrant would have two years from the law's enactment to petition for residency.