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DC Superior Court Will Be Open For Weddings on Saturday (AKA Valentine's Day)

Fourteen couples will get to tie the knot in front of a judge this weekend.

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Photograph via Shutterstock.

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Courthouse weddings are usually just a workday occurrence, but DC Superior Court is making an exception this year when its marriage bureau opens on Saturday for 14 Valentine's Day ceremonies. Starting at 9 AM, public officiants will perform two weddings per hour at the H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse, which is typically only open on weekends for arraignments and other criminal-court proceedings.

This year, however, DC's judiciary is bowing to the romance-industrial complex.

“There's always such a demand for Valentine's Day weddings,” says DC Courts spokeswoman **Leah Gurowitz**.

But don't surprise your sweetie on Saturday morning with a shotgun trip to Judiciary Square—the 14 ceremonies, which include heterosexual and same-sex couples, were booked weeks in advance. (Also, per the rest of this website, there appear to be plenty of things to do on Valentine's Day besides getting a quickie wedding.)

Weekend courthouse marriages could have to be the new norm, though. While the District's population growth is slowing, its marriage rate has spiked in the last couple years. Between March 3, 2013, and March 2, 2014, 8,436 couples were married in Superior Court, compared with 5,679 in the previous 365-day period. One very likely cause: the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *United States v. Windsor*, which ruled that federal marriage benefits could not be withheld from same-sex spouses. The last time DC Superior Court experienced a huge surge in weddings was after the District started issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in 2010. The courthouse recorded 6,604 weddings the first year same-sex marriages were legal, up from 3,101 the year before.

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