



# SIRS Leading Issues: *Gay Rights*

## **Step 1: Developing basic knowledge**

Read the following topic overview to understand the basics of the discussion about gay rights.

According to a Gallup poll, a majority of Americans believe gays should be afforded the same rights as heterosexuals. Recent events have slowly opened the door to giving gays more rights. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas* invalidated a Texas law that made sodomy a crime and upheld the privacy rights of homosexuals. The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire selected the first openly gay bishop in church history. Retail giant Wal-Mart amended its anti-discrimination policy to include sexual orientation. Gay bashing, which drew national attention with the death of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, is considered a hate crime in some jurisdictions. Massachusetts became the first state to allow same-sex marriages. Some states, cities and municipalities offer same-sex couples the opportunity to register as domestic partners or may even offer civil unions. A domestic partnership gives same-sex couples rights such as hospital visitation, power of attorney, and health and pension coverage. The modern gay rights movement in the U.S. began with the Stonewall riots of 1969, which spawned the creation of many gay rights organizations and groups. In the 1970s and '80s, the gay rights movement grew worldwide, leading to the decriminalization of homosexuality in many Western nations as well as the passing of laws against the discrimination of homosexuals. However, gays still face discrimination and abuse in many countries today.

## **Step 2: Understanding differences of opinion**

Read the viewpoint summaries and the related articles to understand the points of difference on the issue of gay rights.

## **Viewpoints**

>>> Gay rights advocates believe in tolerance of all people regardless of their sexual orientation. They feel sexual orientation is innate and cannot be consciously changed. They are against homophobia and argue that all people deserve the same rights and protections. Winnie Stachelberg argues for gay rights in [Q: Should Congress Expand Federal Protections of Gays in the Workplace?](#), stating that "A fundamental American value holds that people who do their jobs, pay their taxes and contribute to their communities should not be singled out for discrimination. Unfortunately, gay people routinely are fired from their jobs, refused work, paid less and otherwise discriminated against in the workplace—with no protection under federal law." Nathaniel Frank in [The](#)

[Pentagon's Sexual Obsession](#) contends the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy towards gays in the military "has been a disaster." Ellen C. Perrin in [Q: Does Adoption by Gay or Lesbian Couples Put American Children at Risk?](#) stresses that "children whose parents are gay or lesbian deserve the same protections that our society provides for other children."

>>> Opponents of gay rights, often religious and political conservatives, feel that homosexuality is a conscious choice, not a biological trait. They are against gay marriage and adoption, contending it weakens the institution of marriage and is not the best environment for children. Louis P. Sheldon in the article [Q: Should Congress Expand Federal Protections of Gays in the Workplace?](#) argues that "the federal government has no right to force America's businesses, labor unions and nonprofits to support a poor lifestyle choice." In [A Gay Man Decries "Gay Rights"](#), Justin Raimondo contends that the gay rights movement has forsaken its libertarian roots, noting that "as tolerance of homosexuality grows, gay activists are increasingly turning to government to impose their agenda on society." Paul Cameron in [Q: Does Adoption by Gay or Lesbian Couples Put American Children at Risk?](#) disputes claims that "homosexual parents are as good for children as heterosexual parents."

## **Step 3: Separating Fact from Opinion**

Making reference to the appropriate articles, complete the tasks below to clarify the competing perspectives on the issue of gay rights.

- Provide examples of people or groups promoting gay rights
- List the reasons they provide for supporting gay rights
- Of the reasons provided, give three examples of documented facts and three examples of opinions
- Provide examples of people or groups opposed to gay rights
- List the reasons they provide for opposing gay rights
- Of the reasons provided, give three examples of documented facts and three examples of opinions

## **Step 4: Making up your own mind**

With referral to the facts and opinions you identified in Step 3, express your opinion on issues relating to gay rights. Provide documented facts to support your opinion.

- Is discrimination against homosexuality justifiable if based on religious or moral beliefs?
- Is the U.S. military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy

towards gays discriminatory? Why or why not?

- Should homosexuals have special rights, privileges or minority status, meriting the same position as ethnic or religious groups?
- How have attitudes towards homosexuals and gay rights changed over the years?

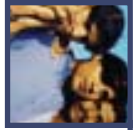
SIRS Researcher, apply what you've learned to one of the following:

- Guide to Writing a Research Paper
- Guide to Writing a Mini-Research Paper
- Guide to Creating a Powerpoint Presentation
- Guide to Creating a Debate Outline

### **Step 5: Apply your knowledge**

Using the links found within the Toolbox section of





# Q: Should Congress Expand Federal Protections of Gays in the Workplace?

## *Yes: Ending Job Discrimination Against Gays and Lesbians Is Good for Business.*

BY WINNIE STACHELBERG

It is not often that business and labor, Senate Democrats and Republicans enthusiastically join together in support of legislation. But that is exactly what happened in February when these disparate groups testified in favor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) in front of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Most people don't realize this, but it is perfectly legal in 38 states to fire a person because of his or her sexual orientation. If passed, ENDA would ensure that gay and lesbian Americans have equal rights in the job market and workplace. Specifically, it would bar employers from using a person's sexual orientation as the basis for employment decisions—including hiring, firing, promotion or compensation.

ENDA enjoys widespread, bipartisan support. The Senate bill's lead cosponsors are Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, (D-Mass.); Arlen Specter, (R-Pa.); Joseph Lieberman, (D-Conn.) and James Jeffords, (I-Vt.). House lead sponsors are Reps. Christopher Shays, (R-Conn.); Barney Frank, (D-Mass.); Mark Foley, (R-Fla.) and Ellen Tauscher, (D-Calif.)

Aside from prohibiting workplace discrimination, ENDA is supported because of what it does *not* do. This legislation does not cover small businesses with fewer than 15 employees. It does not cover religious organizations. And ENDA doesn't allow preferential treatment or quotas based on sexual orientation. And this legislation does not require an employer to provide benefits for the same-sex partner of an employee.

This is partly why major corporations support the bill. They also know that workers can better focus on their jobs and be more productive when they are not worrying about workplace discrimination. ENDA is

simply good for business. In fact, the closer a company is to the top of the Fortune list, the more likely it is to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy.

While nearly 60 percent of the Fortune 500 have such policies, a full 86 percent of the Fortune 50 does. With such major support for equality in corporate America, it should be no surprise that 65 companies, including 29 major corporations, have endorsed ENDA.

Robert Berman, director of human resources and vice president at Eastman Kodak Co., testified at the recent hearing that passing ENDA is a matter of extending fairness and equality to all citizens. "ENDA embodies the values already contained in Kodak's corporate values, our nondiscrimination policy, as well as the principles intrinsic to our nation's fundamental civil-rights laws. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is a logical extension of the fundamental value of fairness to an area that has been neglected for far too long."

FleetBoston President and Chief Executive Officer Charles K. Gifford echoed this support, testifying that passing ENDA is about promoting equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination.

"The lack of workplace protections based on sexual orientation leaves a gaping hole in America's commitment to equal opportunity and is an invitation to the perpetuation of stereotype and prejudice," Gifford told the committee. "I urge the Congress to come together and see to it that discrimination against gays and lesbians in the workplace will soon be viewed as an unacceptable relic of another time."

Some conservatives worry that ENDA might bring unwanted regulation to business. But this misguided notion was addressed at the ENDA hearing

by Lucy Billingsley, a lifelong Republican and a founder of the Billingsley Co., a Texas real-estate firm that employs 30 people.

“Some might voice concern that adding federal workplace protections for gays and lesbians will be a costly burden to America’s small-business owners,” said Billingsley “But actually, not doing so would be the more costly route.

When people trust their employer they will be more adaptable to changing business forces,” she continued. “Inclusive workplace policies can improve recruitment and lower turnover, boost productivity and lead to business opportunities.” Additionally the General Accounting Office found that in the District of Columbia and in the 12 states that prohibit discrimination there has been no marked increase in lawsuits.

Others believe this matter should not be handled at the federal level and instead be left to the states. But, historically, ensuring basic civil rights has been the sphere of Congress. Imagine how detrimental it would have been to our nation if Congress had waited on all 50 states to pass civil-rights laws for other minorities. We might, in fact, still be waiting for some states to pass nondiscrimination laws based on race or religion. Another drawback to the state-by-state approach is that it hurts companies by making them sort out a patchwork of laws.

Stephen L. Miller, chairman and president of Shell Oil Co., says that ENDA would simplify administration and benefit businesses by creating a uniform national policy. “A federal law would level the playing field for corporate America with a single, straightforward policy against discrimination,” explains Miller. “Currently our business has to comply with 12 differing state laws against sexual-orientation discrimination, while our employees in other states are afforded no legal protection. One uniform federal policy would ease our administrative burden.”

Another line of reasoning for ENDA opponents is that since sexual orientation is a “choice,” it should not be protected. First, most modern science leads to the conclusion that sexual orientation—whether gay or straight—is not a choice. Second, that argument fails when you consider that religion, which already is protected, is something that people choose.

Supporting ENDA is not the equivalent of giving approval to a person’s sexual orientation. It only means that people should be judged solely on their merits.

As long as tens of thousands of people go to work each day with fear in their hearts, our nation fails to live up to its promise of basic fairness for all. We must consciously choose to mold an America where each person’s contributions are respected and where everyone is allowed to work with dignity.

A fundamental American value holds that people who do their jobs, pay their taxes and contribute to their communities should not be singled out for discrimination. Unfortunately, gay people routinely are fired from their jobs, refused work, paid less and otherwise discriminated against in the workplace—with no protection under federal law. Antigay discrimination in the American workplace knows few bounds. It occurs in every region of the country, in large cities and small towns, on factory floors and in restaurant dining rooms. It happens in major corporations, struggling nonprofits and public agencies. It affects executives with six-

figure incomes and those who clean offices at night for the minimum wage. To suddenly receive a pink slip after years of positive performance evaluations solely because of one’s sexual orientation is not uncommon. The emotional and financial burdens of unexpected job loss have caused many gay Americans to lose promising careers, homes and even relationships.

Antigay discrimination often means enduring daily harassment—including name-calling, humiliation and physical threats—from coworkers and bosses alike. Some employers are unabashed in their desire to exclude gays and lesbians from the workforce. When the new head of a Midwest health-care facility realized several gay employees were on his staff, he immediately fired them and then bragged about it in the local media. When Cheryl Summerville was fired from her job as a restaurant cook in 1991, her notice said, “This employee is being terminated due to violation of company policy. The employee is gay.”

Other employers are more subtle. Policies rarely enforced against heterosexuals suddenly are invoked against employees perceived to be gay. But whether the discrimination is something that the employer publicizes or conceals, the damage is the same.

Many gay employees, justifiably worried about discrimination, use great discretion about their sexual orientation. The circumstances of daily life, however, often force them out of their protective closets. They have a picture of their partner on their desk. Their same-sex partner’s parent becomes ill. They are photographed by the local newspaper while attending an AIDS memorial. They are seen in a gay neighborhood or are victims of an antigay hate crime. They designate a same-sex partner on their life insurance or buy a home together. They wear wedding rings. Simple acts that heterosexual employees take for granted are dangerous steps for many gay employees and can expose them to harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

The Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the workplace based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin—but not sexual orientation. Currently, a patchwork of protection exists in several states, and an estimated 225 municipalities have laws or policies that bar antigay discrimination. The White House, federal agencies and a large majority of Senate and House offices from both parties have similar policies in place.

The courts consistently have ruled that the Civil Rights Act does not cover sexual orientation. One federal district court, disgusted with evidence of antigay discrimination and frustrated by the lack of a relevant statute, called for action. The situation in the American workplace calls for an “immediate remedial response by Congress,” it said.

We urge Congress to move precipitously and unite our country behind the principles of fairness and equality. Each day that we wait, more hard-working, taxpaying Americans will lose their jobs simply because of who they are. Congress can use its power to put a stop to this injustice and demolish one of the last remaining vestiges of discrimination that haunts our nation.

*Stachelberg is the political director of the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign and directs a team of professional advocates in formulating a public-policy agenda on Capitol Hill and with the Bush administration.*

**T**he Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is being debated in Congress again. It has been reintroduced in various forms for the last seven years by Sens. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.). ENDA ostensibly is designed to forbid “discrimination” against a person’s sexual orientation. Currently, “sexual orientation” is defined in ENDA as “homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality, whether the orientation is real or perceived.”

ENDA will make it a federal offense to discriminate against any individual because of actual or perceived sexual orientation. The bill will cover any employer who is engaged in interstate commerce and who has 15 or more employees.

The primary underlying assumption of ENDA is that the sexual orientation of a person is “fixed,” “normal” and “healthy” in American life. In actuality, the sexual-orientation view advanced by ENDA is closer to the idea of protecting alcoholism or drug abuse than race or gender. Sexual acts have consequences. ENDA attempts to impose a federal gag order on the crucial question about whether homosexual activity is voluntary and whether homosexual practices have negative social consequences. ENDA is based upon the faulty premise that homosexuality is normal and that individuals are born gay. This premise recently has been exposed to be a fraud by none other than homosexual researchers themselves who have admitted there is no scientific proof that a homosexual gene or brain exist.

Psychologists with the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) recently published “The Innate-Immutable Argument Finds No Basis in Science,” which quotes homosexual researchers and philosophers on the discredited born-gay theory. In this article, NARTH quotes homosexual researcher Dean Hamer: “There is not a single master gene that makes people gay. I don’t think we will ever be able to predict who will be gay.” Homosexual researcher Simon LeVay, who studied hypothalamic differences between heterosexual and homosexual brains, noted: “I didn’t show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain.”

NARTH also quotes lesbian activist and philosopher Camille Paglia, who had the most blunt words about homosexuality: “Homosexuality is not ‘normal.’ On the contrary, it is a challenge to the norm. Nature exists whether academics like it or not. And in nature, procreation is the single relentless rule. That is the norm. Our sexual bodies were designed for reproduction. No one is born gay. The idea is ridiculous. Homosexuality is an adaptation, not an inborn trait.”

Homosexuality is a behavior, a lifestyle choice. It is not genetically based, nor is it a healthy way to live. The federal government has no right to force America’s businesses, labor unions and nonprofits to support a poor lifestyle choice. Yet that is precisely what ENDA will do.

ENDA places homosexuality on an equal par with heterosexuality, which has been the norm throughout human

## ***No: Don’t Violate the Freedom of Speech and Religion of Nonhomosexuals on the Job.***

**BY LOUIS P. SHELDON**

history. Behaviors such as homosexuality, bisexuality and cross-dressing are expressions of gender-identity confusion and should not be equated with heterosexuality as being normal.

Labor lawyer Dudley Rochelle has thoroughly analyzed ENDA. She notes that the inclusion of “perceived” in the definition of sexual orientation in ENDA

is a recipe for legal disaster for businesses. She writes:

“There is no condition of sexual abnormality that may not be perceived to fall within one of these categories, including all those excluded by the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act]—transvestism, transexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender-identity disorders and sexual-behavior disorders. Without containing an explicit exclusion, persons with these conditions will have a certain degree of protection under ENDA.”

ENDA will be a trial lawyer’s dream come true and certainly will benefit sexually confused individuals such as transgenders who believe they are the opposite sex.

It will prove to be a nightmare for employers and normal employees, who will be forced to remain silent as their cross-dressing coworkers press for the right to wear dresses to work. The transgender issue also will affect a business’s rest-room policies. Under ENDA, it is likely that a business will be forced to add separate rest rooms, showers and changing areas for cross-dressers, or simply allow a transgender to use whatever rest room he desires.

This already is happening. In June 2001, Ohio University designated 30 rest rooms on campus as “unisex” to appease transgender and homosexual activists on campus.

That same month, a Latino AIDS agency sued its former landlord for discrimination because the landlord was forcing a transgendered male to use the men’s rest room instead of the women’s rest room. The American Civil Liberties Union is defending the right of this man to use a woman’s rest room because he thinks he’s a woman. ENDA will result in endless litigation over rest-room facilities.

ENDA also contains a hate-crime provision that forbids “retaliation or coercion” against a person who is or is perceived to be a homosexual. The bill says: “A person shall not coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with any individual in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of such an individual’s having exercised, enjoyed or assisted in, or encouraged the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by this title.”

An employer or employee who may express opposition to homosexual behavior can be sued under ENDA for verbalizing such beliefs in the workplace. A person with religious convictions against homosexuality can be sued if, for example, he drops an ex-gay Christian-testimony pamphlet on the desk of a practicing homosexual in the office.

Despite claims that ENDA exempts religious denominations or organizations operated by them, the truth is that this legislation will impose federal control over such nonprofit groups as Bible publishers and Christian bookstores, TV/radio stations, day-care centers, day camps and more.

ENDA only exempts an organization when it promotes a religion or is controlled by one. Interfaith groups also would be covered under ENDA.

This legislation will pit religious employees against activist homosexuals in the workplace. The employer will be caught in the middle, trying to balance issues of freedom of speech and religion with the requirements of ENDA. As Rochelle has written: "The employer will have to choose between suppressing the ability of employees to express their religious viewpoints, for which they have relatively little protection in the workplace (religious speech is far less protected than religious observances), and risking costly claims from homosexuals under ENDA's broad language. Most likely, the employer will impose a rule on the workplace that, in effect, allows no criticism of homosexual or bisexual lifestyles, even among peers."

ENDA actually could overturn antisodomy laws in states that have not yet passed pro-homosexual antidiscrimination laws. It would be discriminatory to forbid individuals to engage in sodomy under ENDA.

ENDA does not require quotas in hiring homosexuals but, to comply with the law, a business owner may believe he must keep statistics on how many homosexuals he hires. In addition, courts involved in ENDA lawsuits could force quotas upon businesses to make certain the firms are not engaged in a pattern of discrimination against homosexuals. If homosexuality is considered on an equal par with race or ethnicity, then quotas could be imposed by an activist court.

ENDA will add to the economic burden of employers. To defend a company against an individual filing a discrimination charge, the following fees are typical:

- Agency-dismissal stage: \$5,000-\$25,000
- If claimant files a lawsuit and the company wins on summary judgment: \$25,000-\$75,000
- To prevail at trial: \$150,000-\$250,000

Simply defending one's company from a frivolous lawsuit could bankrupt smaller businesses. Employers eventually may win these lawsuits but suffer huge financial losses and bad publicity.

Rochelle has noted the following points about ENDA's

impact on businesses. The cost of defending and winning one discrimination case can be enough to break a small company. Most small companies do not have insurance that covers discrimination claims. The law of unintended consequences dictates that even laws intentionally limited in scope become expanded by the courts, with consequences never intended by Congress.

ENDA is broader than any federal discrimination law ever passed, both in its definition of discrimination and its protection of different categories of persons.

Employers will have difficulty defending themselves against ENDA claims because the protected class is not based on a known characteristic, may be based on a behavior one can opt into and out of and is subject to interpretation. Employers will be caught in the crossfire of claims between homosexual activists and employees with deeply held religious, moral or traditional beliefs against homosexual behavior.

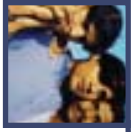
Employers will be unable to identify and prevent hostile work environments due to sexual orientation without invading the privacy of employees.

ENDA will violate the freedom of speech and religion of nonhomosexual employers and employees; impose a homosexual/transgender agenda on businesses; and result in endless litigation that will cost companies millions of dollars to defend themselves. America's businesses must not be forced to protect a sexual behavior that frequently results in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and death from AIDS infections. ENDA must be defeated.

*Sheldon is chairman of the Washington-based Traditional Values Coalition, which educates its 43,000 member churches on legislation relating to pro-family concerns, and previously served as a church pastor for 25 years.*

**For more information, refer to the following subject headings on SIRS Researcher:**

Bills, Legislative  
Discrimination in employment  
Employment Non-Discrimination Act  
Gay rights  
Homophobia



# The Pentagon's Sexual Obsession

BY NATHANIEL FRANK

This spring marks the fifth anniversary of the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy regulating the conduct of its gay troops. The policy was supposed to allow gay military service for the first time, prohibit anti-gay harassment and strictly limit investigations of soldiers' sexuality.

But in an effort to prevent the dreaded subject of homosexuality from ever surfacing in the barracks, the policy also imposed a regime of gay-only silence and celibacy requirements, demanding that gay—but not straight—soldiers keep their sexual orientation secret and remain celibate both on and off the base.

The policy has been a disaster. Since taking effect in 1994, discharges for homosexuality have swelled each year, reaching a peak last year of 1,149 oustings—3 to 4 per day. This is the highest rate of discharge since 1987. Meanwhile, top military men complain of drastic shortfalls in enlistees. American taxpayers are funding new ads, bonuses and other incentives to attract troops to fill vacancies, which exist partly because gay soldiers were expelled. The army now offers \$3,000 up front to any "reasonably able young man or woman who enlists."

The prohibitions on harassment and the limitations on investigations of soldiers' sexuality are ignored by military leaders who enforce discipline and tolerance in other realms of the service on a regular basis. The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), an education and watchdog group that documents violations of the policy, has taken the lead in pressing the Pentagon to enforce its own regulations. While commanders spend millions of dollars and thousands of hours investigating soldiers with suspicious sexualities, not a single person has been disciplined for one of

the 2,485 violations the SLDN has documented of the asking, pursuing or harassing prohibitions—all violations of military law. In fact, when a soldier suspected of being gay or lesbian reports being harassed, many commanders use the occasion to investigate the harassment victim. While the policy was designed to protect the privacy of gays and straights alike by turning the gay issue into a non-issue, the sexuality of our nation's uniformed men and women remains a near-obsession in the armed forces.

Though "don't ask, don't tell" was hammered out as a temporary compromise between President Clinton and Congress, there have been no serious efforts to lift the remaining restrictions since its implementation. Though two federal district judges struck down "don't ask, don't tell" for violating the free speech and equal protection clauses of the Constitution, eight other challenges in five federal appellate courts have upheld the statute's constitutionality. The Supreme Court repeatedly has refused to consider challenges to the policy. Since the policy is federal law, and no longer an internal military regulation, it would take far greater effort to repeal it than before the government became involved. Even if the executive branch wanted to end the ban altogether, the barriers now in place make the prospect of change grim.

**For more information, refer to the following subject headings on SIRS Researcher:**

Gay rights  
U.S. Dept. of Defense  
U.S., Armed Forces, Gays

# Q: Does Adoption by Gay or Lesbian Couples Put American Children at Risk?

BY JULIAN SANCHEZ

## *Yes: The Conclusions of the American Academy of Pediatrics Are Not to Be Believed.*

**O**n Feb. 4, 2000, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended “legal and legislative efforts” to allow children “born to or adopted by one member of a gay or lesbian couple” to be adopted by the homosexual partner.

Such a law effectively would eliminate the possibility of adoption by other family members following the death of the parent. It also would cause problems for numerous children.

The AAP, like many other professional organizations, apparently was too caught up in promoting identity politics to address all the evidence relevant to homosexual adoption. In its report, the organization offered only positive evidence about gays and lesbians as parents. “In fact,” the report concluded “growing up with parents who are lesbian or gay may confer some advantages to children.” Really?

There are three sets of information on the issue: clinical reports of psychiatric disturbance of children with homosexual parents, testimonies of children with homosexual parents concerning their situation and studies that have compared the children of homosexuals with the children of nonhomosexuals. The AAP ignored the first two sets and had to cherry-pick the comparative studies to arrive at the claim that “[n]o data have pointed to any risk to children as a result of growing up in a family with one or more gay parents.”

A number of clinical reports detail “acting-out behavior,” homosexual seduction, elective muteness and the desire for a mother by children with homosexual parents. I am unaware of a single child being disturbed because his mother and father were married.

The AAP also ignored the testimonies of children with homosexual parents—probably the best evidence since these kids had to “live with it rather than deal with a theory. More than 150 children with homosexual parents have provided, in extensive

interviews, detailed evidence of the difficulties they encountered as a result. A study Paul and Kirk Cameron published this year in *Psychological Reports* analyzed the content of 57 life-story narratives by children with homosexual parents assembled by lesbian researchers Louise Rafkin (United States) and Lisa Saffron (Britain).

In these narratives, children in 48 of the 52 families (92 percent) mentioned one or more “problems.” Of the 213 problems which were scored—including hypersexuality, instability, molestation, domestic violence—children attributed 201 (94 percent) to their homosexual parent(s).

Here are four sample excerpts:

- One 9-year-old girl said: “My biological mother is S. and my other mother is L. We’ve lived together for a year. Before that L. lived across the street.... My mom met L.; L. had just broken up with someone. We moved in together because it got complicated going back and forth every night. All of a sudden I felt like I was a different person because my mom was a lesbian.... I get angry because I can’t tell anybody about my mom. The kids at school would laugh.... They say awful things about lesbians...then they make fun of me. Having lesbian mothers is nothing to laugh about.... I have told my [mother] that she has made my life difficult.”

- A 12-year-old boy in the United Kingdom said: “Mum...has had several girlfriends in my lifetime.... I



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don't go around saying that I've got two mums.... If we are sitting in a restaurant eating, she'll say, 'I want you to know about all these sex things.' And she'll go on about everything, just shouting it out.... Sometimes when mum embarrasses me, I think, 'I wish I had a dad.'... Been to every gay pride march. Last year, while attending, we went up to a field... when two men came up to us. One of them started touching me. I didn't want to go this year because of that."

- According to a 39-year-old woman: "In my memories, I'm always looking for my mother and finding her with a woman doing things I don't understand.... Sometimes they blame me for opening a door that wasn't even locked.... [At about the age of 10], I noticed a door that I hadn't yet opened. Inside I saw a big bed. My mother sat up suddenly and stared at me. She was with B.... and then B. shouted, 'You f...ing sneaking brat!' My mother never said a word. [Then came N.] I came to hate N. because of the way she and my mother fought every night. They screamed and bickered and whined and pouted over everything. N. closed my mother's hand in the car door.... She and N. hadn't made love in seven years."

- According to a 19-year-old man: "When I was about 7, my mother told me that this woman, D., was going to stay with us for a while—and she never left! I didn't think anything much about it until I was about 10.... It just became obvious because she and my mother were sleeping together. A few months after D. left, my mother started to see another woman, but that didn't last. Then she got involved with a different woman...;she'd be violent toward my mother.... After that she started to go on marches and to women's groups.... There were some women in these groups who objected to men altogether, and I couldn't cope with that."

All 57 narratives can be found at [www.familyresearchinst.org](http://www.familyresearchinst.org). Anyone who believes that living with homosexual parents confers "some advantages to children" should read these accounts.

The AAP ignored every comparative study of children that showed those with homosexual parents experiencing more problems. These include the largest comparative study, reported in 1996 by Sotirios Sarantakos in the journal, *Children Australia*, of 58 elementary schoolchildren raised by coupled homosexual parents who were closely matched (by age, sex, grade in school, social class) with 58 children of cohabiting heterosexual parents and 58 raised by married parents. Teachers reported that the married couples' children scored best at math and language but somewhat lower in social studies, experienced the highest level of parental involvement at school as well as at home and had parents with the highest expectations for them. The children of homosexuals scored lowest in math and language and somewhat higher in social studies, were the least popular, experienced the lowest level of parental involvement at school and at home, had parents with the lowest expectations for them and least frequently expressed higher educational and career expectations.

Yet the AAP said that studies have "failed to document any differences between such groups on...academic success." The organization's report also ignored the only empirical study based upon a random sample that reported on 17 adults (out of a sample of 5,182) with homosexual parents. Detailed by Cameron and Cameron in the journal *Adolescence* in 1996,

the 17 were disproportionately apt to report sexual relationships with their parents, more apt to report a less than exclusive heterosexual orientation, more frequently reported gender dissatisfaction and were more apt to report that their first sexual experience was homosexual.

The AAP report also seemingly ignored a 1998 *Psychological Reports* study by Cameron and Cameron that included the largest number of children with homosexual parents. That study compared 73 children of homosexuals with 105 children of heterosexuals. Of the 66 problems cited by panels of judges who extensively reviewed the living conditions and psychological reactions of children of homosexuals undergoing a divorce from heterosexuals, 64 (97 percent) were attributed to the homosexual parent.

Finally, while ignoring studies that contradicted its own conclusions, the AAP misrepresented numerous findings from the limited literature it cited. Thus, Sharon Huggins compared 18 children of 16 volunteer/lesbian mothers with 18 children of 16 volunteer/heterosexual/divorced mothers on self-esteem. Huggins reported statistically nonsignificant differences between the 19 children of mothers who were not living with a lover versus the 17 children of mothers who were living with a lover; and, further, that [the four] "adolescent daughters with high self-esteem had been told of their mother's lesbianism at a mean age of 6.0 years. In contrast [the five] adolescent daughters with low self-esteem had been told at a mean age of 9.6 years" and "three of four of the mothers with high self-esteem daughters were currently living with lesbian lovers, but only one of four of the lesbian mothers with low self-esteem daughters was currently living with a lesbian lover."

The AAP cited Huggins as proving that "children's self-esteem has been shown to be higher among adolescents whose mothers (of any sexual orientation) were in a new partnered relationship after divorce, compared with those whose mother remained single, and among those who found out at a younger age that their parent was homosexual, compared with those who found out when they were older," thus transforming statistical non-events based on niggling numbers of volunteers into important differences—twice in one sentence!

We have examined more than 10,000 obituaries of homosexuals: The median age of death for lesbians was in the 40s to 50s; for homosexuals it was in the 40s. Most Americans live into their 70s. Yet in the 1996 U.S. government sex survey the oldest lesbian was 49 years old and the oldest gay 54.

Children with homosexual parents are considerably more apt to lose a parent to death. Indeed, a homosexual couple in their 30s is roughly equivalent to a nonhomosexual couple in their late 40s or 50s. Adoption agencies will seldom permit a couple in their late 40s or 50s adopt a child because of the risk of parental death, and the consequent social and psychological difficulty for the child. The AAP did not address this fact—one with profound implications for any child legally related to a homosexual.

As usual, the media picked up on the AAP report as authoritative, assuming that it represented the consensus of a large and highly educated membership. Not so. As in other professional organizations, the vast majority of members pay their dues, read the journal and never engage in professional politics. As a consequence, a small but active minority of

members gains control and uses the organization to promote its agenda. Too often, the result is ideological literature that misrepresents the true state of knowledge.

Gay-rights activists have been particularly adept at manipulating research and reports to their own ends. For years the media reported that all studies revealed that 10 percent of the population was homosexual. In fact, few if any studies ever came to that conclusion. For the next few years we will have to live with the repeated generalization that all

studies prove homosexual parents are as good for children as heterosexual parents, and perhaps even better. What little literature exists on the subject proves no such thing. Indeed, translated into the language of accounting, the AAP report could be described as “cooking the books.”

*Cameron is chairman of the Family Research Institute in Colorado Springs, which for 20 years has published research in the scientific literature bearing upon sexual social policy. Cameron holds a doctorate in social psychology from the University of Colorado.*

## ***No: Decades of Research Show No Risk in Adopted Children Raised by Gay Parents.***

**C**onsider the following scenarios that are based on real children’s lives:

- Richard adopted Sarah just before her first birthday. Shortly thereafter he met Wesley and, by the time Sarah was 2, she knew the two men as Daddy and Papa. The three were a stable family until Richard’s car was hit by a drunk driver when he was bringing Sarah home from school one day. Richard was admitted to the intensive-care unit with serious head and abdominal injuries. Sarah was brought to the emergency room and Wesley was called. The emergency-room nurses said that Wesley could not authorize the emergency surgery Sarah needed to remove glass from her face and right eye because he was not her legal parent.

- Catherine and Vanessa already had been a stable couple for five years when they decided that they wanted to become parents. Vanessa conceived using alternative insemination methods and, nine months later, William was born. Vanessa stayed home full time with her son while Catherine continued to work at her executive position in a financial-consulting firm. They shared equally in household tasks and caring for Will throughout his preschool years. When Will was in the third grade Catherine and Vanessa decided to separate. Their conflicts resulted in disagreements about appropriate visitation and child-support arrangements. Will now is being treated for depression and anxiety because he no longer has an ongoing relationship with Catherine (whom he calls “Momma Kate”), and because Vanessa has had to work very long hours to maintain the family’s financial security on her own.

- Samantha is 7 years old and has cerebral palsy. Her parents were addicted to crack cocaine and had several run-ins with the law. When they were convicted of breaking and entering and attempted manslaughter, the Department of Social Services insisted that Samantha, who was then 2 years old, be placed in a foster home. In the five years since then she has been in six different foster homes while she waits for an adoptive home. A lesbian couple wants to adopt Samantha,

but their state’s laws allow adoption only by people who are heterosexual.

These circumstances and others like them occur every day. They are the result of laws that interfere with the rights of certain people to establish a legal relationship with their children.

And the children suffer as a

result. Therefore, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has published a new policy statement that highlights the benefits for children of having both their parents be legally recognized.

Because gay men and lesbians cannot marry, they generally cannot adopt their partner’s child, even if they are in every way acting as the child’s parents—changing their diapers, taking them to school and church, staying home from work when they are sick and planning their birthday parties. If the biological or adoptive parent becomes disabled or dies, the child’s other parent cannot authorize medical care or provide health insurance or Social Security benefits. Another relative can claim custody of the child and thereby cause the child to lose both of his/her parents. If the couple separates, the nonbiologic/adoptive parent has no right to regular visitation and no responsibility to provide child support.

Children whose parents are gay or lesbian deserve the same protections that our society provides for other children. The AAP policy statement says that “Children who are born to or adopted by one member of a same-sex couple deserve the security of two legally recognized parents. Therefore, the American Academy of Pediatrics supports legislative and legal efforts to provide the possibility of adoption of the child by the second parent or coparent in these families.”

Paul Cameron of the Family Research Institute and I agree that children fare better with two parents than with only one. Does it not make sense, then, to allow these children to rely on both of their parents for the basic security and protections that our society has guaranteed to all other children?

The critics of the AAP’s policy statement have not present-

ed any new evidence to support an alternative position, but have relied instead on challenging the strength of the scientific data on which the policy statement is based. It is far easier to criticize the research that others have done than to conduct original scientific investigations.

In researching this issue for the AAP, I reviewed all the published literature about the well-being of children whose parents were gay or lesbian. My review is published in the technical report that accompanied the publication of the policy statement. It concludes that “a growing body of scientific literature demonstrates that children who grow up with one or two gay and/or lesbian parents fare as well in emotional, cognitive, social and sexual functioning as do children whose parents are heterosexual. Children’s optimal development appears to be influenced more by the nature of the relationships and interactions within the family unit than by the particular structural form it takes.”

Investigators have concentrated on four areas: the attitudes and behaviors of gay and lesbian parents and the psychosexual development, social experience and emotional status of their children.

With regard to the attitudes and behaviors of gay and lesbian parents, empirical evidence gathered by several researchers during the last two decades (such as F.W. Bozett, R.L. Barrett, J.J. Bigner and J.M. Bailey) reveals that gay fathers have substantial evidence of nurturance and investment in their paternal role. The research shows no differences from heterosexual fathers in providing appropriate recreation, encouraging autonomy, maintaining disciplinary guidelines or dealing with general problems of parenting.

Similarly, few differences have been found when comparing lesbian and heterosexual mothers’ self-esteem, psychological adjustment and attitudes toward child rearing. Lesbian mothers demonstrate normal functioning on interviews and psychological assessments, and their scores on standardized measures of self-esteem, anxiety, depression and parenting stress are indistinguishable from those reported by heterosexual mothers. Lesbian mothers strongly endorse child-centered attitudes and commitment to their maternal roles and are typically even more concerned with providing male role models for their children than are divorced heterosexual mothers.

Several studies comparing children who have a lesbian mother to children whose mother is heterosexual (by R.W. Chan, D.K. Flaks, S. Golombok and F. Tasker, among others) have not shown any differences between these groups on personality measures, measures of peer group relationships, self-esteem, behavioral difficulties, academic success or warmth and quality of family relationships.

The gender identity of children raised by lesbian mothers consistently has been found to be in line with their biological sex. None of the more than 400 children studied to date has shown evidence of gender-identity confusion, wished to be the other sex or consistently engaged in cross-gender behavior. No differences have been found in the toy, game, activity, dress or friendship preferences of boys or girls who had lesbian mothers, compared with those who had heterosexual mothers. Compared with young adults who had heterosexual mothers, men and women who had lesbian mothers were slightly more

likely to consider the possibility of having a same-sex partner, but actually very similar proportions of both groups have identified themselves as homosexual.

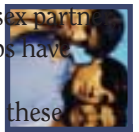
Critics argue that the small samples on which these studies are based invalidate their findings and, therefore, cannot be generalized to represent what is true for other children and other families. While no one would argue that it would be preferable to be able to enroll larger numbers of children and families for a longer period of time, all research is based on similar compromises.

The scientific approach to answering an important question of large scale is to analyze statistically several small studies in what is called a meta-analysis. This technique allows for the prediction of the answer to a particular question as if a large study had been feasible. A meta-analysis was indeed done and published in 1996 (by M. Allen and N. Burrell), addressing the question of whether children’s emotional, academic or sexual development had been harmed as a result of being raised in a family in which the two parents were the same sex. The conclusions from this meta-analysis support the weight of evidence gathered during several decades using diverse samples and methodologies—namely, that the data provide no evidence of risk to children based on growing up in a family with one or more gay parents.

Critics argue further that studies investigating the well-being of children whose parents are gay or lesbian have used nonstandardized instruments, inappropriate research designs and inadequate comparison groups. While these critiques are valid for some of the studies done before 1985, they no longer are true. Studies done by Golombok and her colleagues in the last 15 years, for example, are carefully designed, using well-respected measurement and statistical strategies and several appropriately matched comparison groups. What is most impressive is that whatever samples are studied, whatever outcomes are measured and whatever research strategies are employed, the results repeatedly are very similar: No study has demonstrated any risk whatsoever to children as a result of growing up in a family with one or more gay parents.

The research is there showing us what children need: a loving, stable family and assurance of consistency and continuity. Coparent adoption provides legal, financial and emotional security and thus is in the best interests of children. The AAP recommendations simply seek to guarantee children of same-sex parents the same rights and protections that other children have.

*Perrin is a professor of developmental—behavioral pediatrics at the Floating Hospital for Children of Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston. She is the author of a new book entitled Sexual Orientation in Children and Adolescents: Implications for Health Care.*

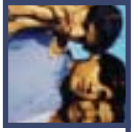


SIRS  
Leading Issues: Gay Rights

**For more information, refer to the following subject headings on SIRS Researcher:**

- Adoption
- Child development
- Children of gay parents
- Gay adoption
- Gay families
- Gay parents
- Gay rights

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# A Gay Man Decries “Gay Rights”

BY JUSTIN RAIMONDO

The gay activists of yesteryear asked government to leave them alone. Their political program centered on decriminalizing homosexual relations between consenting adults. But today, as tolerance of homosexuality grows, gay activists are increasingly turning to government to impose their agenda on society. Though state power has been used as a bludgeon against gay people since at least the Middle Ages, suddenly today's gay leaders seem to be picking up the club themselves, saying, “Now it's *our* turn.” This is a great irony—and a potential cause of trouble for homosexuals and turmoil for America.

The birth of the gay liberation movement in America can be dated to the evening of June 27, 1969, when patrons of the Stonewall Inn, a homosexual bar in Manhattan, resisted a police attempt to close the place down. For three days a neighborhood rebellion effectively kept the police from carrying on the ancient tradition of shaking down gay bars and busting the ones that didn't pay up. In the official complaint, the operators of the Stonewall were cited for not having a liquor license. But even if they had applied, it is doubtful their request would have been granted: the state licensing bureau was notoriously hostile to gay establishments. The first modern gay protesters, then, were rebelling against regulation. Indeed, liberation from government generally was a central idea of gay liberation.

But something happened to divert the gay movement from this original goal. Today, the so-called gay rights movement sees government as the agency, not the enemy, of liberty. From socialized medicine to anti-discrimination legislation to mandatory “tolerance” lessons in the schools, there is no scheme to increase the power of government these alleged freedom fighters do not endorse.

As long as homosexual acts between consenting adults are illegal in some states, I believe organizations dedicated to their repeal have a legitimate place in the constellation of human rights causes. Beyond this

strictly limited goal, however, a political movement based on sexual orientation is a grotesque aberration. The fact that the gay rights movement has taken on an increasingly authoritarian style is the inevitable result of basing political allegiances on clan loyalties instead of philosophical principles.

In a free society there are no gay rights, only individual rights. For homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, these rights boil down to a single principle: the right to be let alone. Politically, the gay rights movement must return to its early libertarian roots. This would begin the vital process of depoliticizing homosexuality and defusing a dangerous culture war the gay minority can never win.

Even the state “neutrality” that gay “centrists” like Andrew Sullivan advocate would force government treatment of homosexuality as on a par with heterosexuality, as seen in Sullivan's demands for gay pseudo-“marriage” and open gays in the military. True neutrality, however, would involve not recognition but **INDIFFERENCE**, inattention, inaction. A neutral state would neither penalize nor reward homosexual behavior. It would neither forbid nor would it grant legal status to homosexual marriage. In a military setting, a neutral state would subject all sexuality to the same rigorous regulation.

Gays must reject the nonsensical idea that they're oppressed by “heterosexism,” a vile ideology that subordinates and denigrates homosexuals by insisting on the centrality of heterosexuality in human culture. There is no escaping human biology, however much such a project entrances cloistered academics who imagine that human sexuality is a “social construction” to be altered at will. Homosexuals are and always will be a rarity, a tiny minority necessarily outside of the traditional family. The heterosexual “bias” of social institutions is not something that needs to be imposed on a reluctant society by an oppressive state, but a predilection that comes quite naturally and inevitably. If this is “homophobia;” then nature is a bigot. If gays use

the power of the state to correct this historic “injustice,” they are engaged in an act of belligerence which will rightly be seen as a challenge to the primacy of the traditional family.

Even many gay liberals recognize that the gay rights model has outlived whatever usefulness it may once have had. The idea of gay people, particularly gay men, as a victim group is so contrary to reality it is no longer sustainable. In economic, political, and cultural clout, gays wield influence way out of proportion to their numbers, a fact which has spawned numerous conspiracy theories. From the medieval Knights of Malta to the mysterious “Homintern” of more modern times, the idea of a powerful homosexual cabal is a persistent theme in conspiracy literature, one that mimics the form and style of anti-Semitic lore.

Overlaid with the victim propaganda of the past 20 years, this image of hidden homosexual power combines to produce a quite unappealing character: a creature of privilege constantly whining about his plight. If the gay political leadership is so concerned about the alleged rise of anti-gay bigotry, perhaps they will take care to project a less bash-able image.

As a specialized contingent of an army dedicated to ramming “multicultural” socialism down the throats of the American people, the gay lobby capitalizes on the worst insecurities of its constituents. Holding up the bogeyman of the “Religious Right” to keep the troops in line, the gay politicians point to Jesse Helms and say, “Without us, you wouldn’t have a chance against him.”

But in fact no major religious conservative has called for legal measures against homosexuals. The Christian Coalition, the Eagle Forum, and other grassroots conservative activists only involved themselves in supposedly “anti-gay” political activities defensively, in working to overturn gay rights legislation that attacked their most deeply held beliefs.

The leadership of the gay movement is playing with fire. The great tragedy is that they will not be the only ones burned. The volatility of the issues they are raising—which involve religion, family, and the most basic assumptions of what it is to be human—risks a social explosion for which they must be held accountable. The boldness of the attempt to introduce a “gay positive” curriculum into the public schools, the militant victim stance that brooks no questioning, the blunt intolerance once they gain power in urban ghettos like San Francisco—all this, combined with the fact that the gay rights paradigm itself represents an intolerable invasion of liberty, is bound to produce a reaction from the majority.

It’s time to challenge the fiction that the “gay rights” movement speaks for all or even most gay people. It does not. Gay rights legislation violates the principles of authentic liberalism, and homosexuals should speak out against it—to distance themselves from the excesses of a militantly destructive movement, to help avert societal damage, and to right some grave wrongs. Those wrongs are the political assault being waged on the heterosexual family by the theoreticians of the gay rights revolution; the endless ridicule of religion that suffuses the gay press; and the limitless con-

tempt for all tradition and “bourgeois values” that permeates the homosexual subculture.

And the search for a gay “ethnicity” is as much a dead-end as the effort to forge a gay political movement. In no sense is homosexuality comparable to being, say, Armenian. There is no gay culture separate from the culture in general, and in spite of pseudoscientific claims to the contrary, there is no genetically encoded gay race. There is only behavior engaged in by a diverse range of individuals, each acting from his or her own motives and predispositions.

Efforts to sanctify such behavior, or to explain it in such a way that it has no moral content, are counterproductive as well as unconvincing. Attempting to somehow reconcile homosexuality with the customs and religious beliefs of the majority is to concede the one right that people, gay and straight, really DO have—the right NOT to have to justify one’s existence.

The obsession with “coming out,” and the essentially feminine self-centeredness such a ritual implies, is surely another aspect of the gay movement that has to go. Do we really need to know the sexual proclivities of our neighbors and coworkers, or even our brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles?

To expect approval or official sanction for so personal a matter as sexuality is a sign of weak character. To unblushingly ask (nay, *demand*) such approval in the form of some act of government is an act of unparalleled bad taste. It is also a confession of such a devastating lack of self-esteem, of inner emptiness, that its public expression is hard to fathom. Self-esteem is not a quality to be sought from others, nor can it be legislated into existence.

The history of the gay movement reveals that ideology and Eros are antipodes. Politics, said Orwell, is “sex gone sour,” and sour certainly describes the worldview of gay rights dogmatists. This is evident just by looking at them: Beleaguered on every side by a “heterosexist” society, and usually too homely to get a date, these poor souls have so politicized their sexuality it can hardly be said to exist.

Instead of the preening moralism of gay “visibility,” a sensible resolution of the Gay Question would call for a return to the joys of private life, the rediscovery of discretion and even anonymity. The politicization of everyday life—of sex and the core institutions of the culture—is a trend to be fiercely resisted, not just by gay people but by lovers of liberty in every sphere of human endeavor.

*Justin Raimondo is a San Francisco writer. His book Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard will be published in June.*

**For more information, refer to the following subject headings on SIRS Researcher:**

Gay liberation movement  
Gay rights  
Gays, Legal status, laws, etc.  
Liberty