



Minnesota NOW

CANDIDATE BRIEFING

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MINNESOTA NOW'S POSITION ON SAME SEX MARRIAGES

Minnesota NOW takes the position that same-sex marriages should be legal and that lesbian/gay marriage partners should have the same rights as other married couples.

Lesbian/gay committed partnerships deserve the same recognition, dignity, community, and legal support as heterosexual unions. To deny such respect and support is to discriminate against a group of people on the basis of their sexuality.

Some of the issues involved include:

Benefits: Lesbian/gay couples should enjoy the same health, dental, life insurance, and family leave benefits as heterosexual couples. Not having these benefits puts lesbian/gay couples at a financial disadvantage and may make it more difficult for individuals to care for each other when needed.

Inheritance and legal decisions: Without the presumption of inheritance or guardianship rights afforded to heterosexual couples, lesbian/gay couples face serious challenges to having their wishes met after death or disability. The story of Karen Thompson and Sharon Kowalski, a Minnesota lesbian couple, is a case in point. Several years into their committed relationship, Kowalski became severely disabled in an accident. Although Kowalski, both before and after she was disabled, clearly indicated she wanted to be cared for by Thompson, and Thompson was judged by social workers to be an excellent caregiver for Kowalski, Kowalski's parents were successful in blocking Thompson's efforts to become guardian for many years.

Adoption: Lesbian/gay parents have major problems adopting children, even when one of them is the biological parent. Gay couples and individuals can raise children just as well as heterosexuals can, and should not be restricted from doing so except by the same child protection laws and placement guidelines that are applied to all parenting/adoptions.

Citizenship: When one partner is a U.S. citizen and the other is not, lesbian/gay couples often find themselves unable to stay together because of immigration laws. If they were allowed to be married, the non-citizen could gain permanent residency or citizenship.

For more information on NOW's positions on legislative issues, call or write Minnesota NOW.