



NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS

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March 11, 2010

The Honorable Fortney Pete Stark  
U.S. House of Representatives  
239 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support of H.R. 4806 (Every Child Deserves a Family Act)

On behalf of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), we write in support of H.R. 4806, the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, which would prohibit any entity that receives federal assistance from denying or delaying a placement of a child into an adoptive or foster care home, based solely on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of the prospective parent or child. NCLR thanks you for your commitment to ending discrimination against foster parents and prospective adoptive parents and ensuring that all children have safe and loving homes.

NCLR is a national legal organization committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education. NCLR is fully committed to ensuring the need for permanency for children in our nation's child welfare system. NCLR has over 30 years of legal victories in ensuring that LGBT parents and families are provided with the legal protections that allow children to have stability and security in their families.

Numerous national organizations dedicated to the health and well-being of children, including the Child Welfare League of America, the American Psychological Association, and the American Bar Association, support allowing qualified unmarried and gay and lesbian parents to adopt and foster children. Over thirty years of social science research has shown that children raised by LGBT parents are as well-adjusted, and as psychologically, emotionally, educationally, and socially successful as other children.

Prohibiting qualified LGBT parents from adopting or fostering children reduces the number of families available to children in need of safe and stable homes. Every year thousands of youth age out of foster care and are without permanent homes or adoptive parents. H.R. 4806 would allow these youth a non-discriminatory opportunity to a home with loving parents regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identification, or marital status. H.R. 4806 would prevent private agencies, judges, or social workers from denying or delaying adoptions by same-sex couples. The U.S Department of Health and Human Services reports that more than 129,000 children are waiting for an adoptive home or permanent placement. As studies show that youth in stable foster or adoptive placements do better as adults, allowing discrimination against qualified gay and lesbian parents' would only continue to disadvantage these youth.

H.R. 4806 ensures that all youth are allowed the opportunity to a permanent home with loving parents no matter the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of the prospective parent(s). For all these reasons, NCLR strongly supports the passage of H.R. 4806.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jody Marksamer".

Jody Marksamer, Esq.  
Staff Attorney & Youth Project Director  
National Center for Lesbian Rights

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Catherine Sakimura".

Catherine Sakimura, Esq.  
Staff Attorney & Family Protection Project Coordinator  
National Center for Lesbian Rights