



FOCUS ON THE FAMILY POSITION STATEMENT:

Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships as opposed to Reciprocal Beneficiary Contracts

Focus on the Family maintains that the institution of marriage is intended by God to be a relationship between the two halves of humanity: a man and a woman. We oppose any other legal definition of marriage.

The homosexual-bisexual-transgender advocacy movement has articulated their position as settling for nothing less than same-sex marriage. In the meantime, they have clearly stated that civil unions and domestic partnerships are stepping stones to that end. In either case, Focus on the Family opposes the legal creation of civil unions and domestic partnerships as counterfeit policy attempts to imitate marriage. We do not support the creation of special categories of rights based on sexual expression or gender identity.

Furthermore, we view civil unions and domestic partnerships as discriminatory as such benefit arrangements are based on sexual expression and are therefore unfair to non-sexual domestic situations with legitimate claims to contractual provisions. Government policies should not discriminate against *any* member of society in regard to housing, employment, inheritance rights or medical decision-making.

In lieu of civil unions and domestic partnerships, we believe a better approach is the allowance of reciprocal beneficiary contracts. Such contracts streamline existing benefits found in contract law, such as legal arrangements to co-own or inherit property, medical visitation and decision-making, guardianship of children, and medical benefits, if an employer allows. Such arrangements are equally available to any persons who do not qualify to "marry;" furthermore, these contracts are not premised on the rights or privileges of marriage or sexual expression.