



**KENTUCKY EQUALITY
FEDERATION**



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**EXECUTIVE STATEMENT
OFFICE OF FEDERATION PRESIDENT**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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RE: DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS - *University of Kentucky joins the University of Louisville in voting to extend domestic partner benefits to same-sex couples.*

Mr. Jordan Palmer, president of the Kentucky Equality Federation, and outgoing Chair of its Board of Directors makes the following statements regarding domestic partnerships, and religion. This is related to statements made by Senate President Williams and Representative Lee that they will introduce and/or support legislation to keep Kentucky universities from making decisions on domestic partnerships.

The 2007 Kentucky House and Senate Regular Session will likely be the most challenging the commonwealth's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population has ever faced. With the issue of domestic partner benefits at Kentucky universities currently in the spotlight, the real question everyone is asking is "what is a family.....what do you call someone you have every intention of spending the rest of your life with?"

Our nation was founded on diversity, social acceptance, and tolerance yet there is nothing within the sovereign borders of this commonwealth that validates, protects or encourages the existence of same-sex couples.

I certainly would never support forcing religious leaders and institutions to marry same-sex couples; this would be a clear violation of their constitutional rights. Legally, the power to marry however isn't granted by God, but rather the state.

With your relationship being recognized and validated by the state comes a variety of protections same-sex couples cannot currently enjoy: Accidental death benefit for the surviving spouse of a government employee; Appointment as guardian of a minor; Beneficial owner status of corporate securities; Bill of Rights benefits for victims and witnesses; Consent to post-mortem examination; Control, division, acquisition, and disposition of community property; Criminal injuries compensation; Death benefit for surviving spouse for government employee; Disclosure of vital statistics records; Eligibility for housing opportunity allowance program of the Housing, Finance and Development Corporation; Exemption from claims of Department of Human Services for social services payments, financial assistance, or burial payments; Exemption from conveyance tax; Funeral leave for government employees; Income tax deductions, credits, rates exemption, and estimates; Insurance licenses, coverage, eligibility, and benefits organization of mutual benefits society; Legal status with partner's children; Making partner medical decisions; Payment of wages to a relative of deceased employee; Payment of worker's compensation benefits after death; Permission to make arrangements for burial or cremation; Public assistance from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Right to change names; Right to inherit property; Rights and

proceedings for involuntary hospitalization and treatment; Spousal privilege and confidential marriage communications; and Tax relief for natural disaster losses. **This is my opinion takes the issue out of the religious forum, and into a legal one.**

Ultra-conservative homophobes are destroying the very fabric of our commonwealth and our republic by introducing and/or supporting anti-gay legislation. Introducing or supporting legislation that specifically targets and exempts a specific group of people from constitutional freedoms enjoyed by the majority is an attack on the very foundation that makes this nation great: tolerance, social acceptance, and diversity.

For the religious aspect of same-sex relationships, as a practicing Christian my personal spiritual relationship with God is just that, my relationship. It is not subject to public scrutiny, opinion, or debate. I believe God made me the way I am, I am a manifestation of his work, a testament to his greatness, and no religious leader or institution is qualified to judge any aspect of my religious life; God reserves this right exclusively.

I would like to remind Kentucky citizens of the following provision in the Constitution of our commonwealth as the November election approaches: "All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety, happiness and the protection of property. For the advancement of these ends, they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may deem proper."

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