



**Statement by Rea Carey, Executive Director,  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
'Respect for Marriage Act' introduction, Sept. 15, 2009**

Hello. My name is Rea Carey, and I am executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

We thank each of these representatives for working to dismantle one of the most discriminatory and far-reaching laws ever to emerge against our community: the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act." And we applaud all the members who have signed on so quickly as co-sponsors to repeal this hateful law.

DOMA is and has always been an immoral attack on same-sex couples, our families and our fundamental humanity.

It has only served to discriminate against people and belittle our nation's heralded values of freedom, fairness and justice. It is long past time to repeal DOMA, which has left a moral scar on this country.

Today, we are taking a step toward closing this ugly chapter in our nation's history, and toward ensuring same-sex couples and our families are treated fairly. Too many have been hurt for too long because of DOMA. It is time to end this injustice now.

The stories of hardship under this law are heartbreaking. One woman wrote to me this summer saying, "I worry about my partner. I'm working hard and have a good job, but if anything happens to me, my partner (of 17 years) will not be able to share in the retirement that I have worked for all of these years...We are a part of this society too."

We at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, along with people all across the country — from every town and every background — recognize that our entire country benefits when everyone is allowed to contribute their talents and skills, free from discrimination. That's why we are urging the passage of the "Respect for Marriage Act."

Thank you.