



Statement on GLBT Issues

Ensuring each and every citizen's ability to reach his or her full human potential

Today, America faces serious challenges. Meeting the challenges of our time demands three things: new leadership, new ideas, and a new spirit of service. I've served this country alongside the most talented men and women in the world. To fulfill our country's full potential, we must nurture every person's abilities regardless of his or her individual characteristics, such as race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. We are all Americans. Therefore, I am calling all Americans to find a way to serve with a new, inclusive spirit of patriotism. We cannot reach our full potential by discriminating against people because of their sexual orientation. To encourage all Americans to actively participate in our democracy, I would:

- **Ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.** We should make sure that the Civil Rights Act bans discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and sexual orientation.
- **Strengthen federal protections against hate crimes.** No one in this country should be the target of violence because of their appearance, religion, or sexual orientation.
- **Protect all families.** Families in the United States come in many shapes and sizes. Currently, most of our laws extend rights and responsibilities only to heterosexual families and explicitly exclude same-sex couples from enjoying those same rights and responsibilities. It is in the best interest of our country to promote stable communities and families – this includes both heterosexual and same-sex families. Accordingly, I believe that same-sex couples should not be denied rights to pensions, health insurance, family medical leave, bereavement leave, hospital visitation, survivor benefits, and other basic legal protections that all families and children need.
- **Give federal employees the right to name same-sex partners as beneficiaries.** Major U.S. corporations have adopted human resources policies that allow employees to designate a domestic partner as a beneficiary of health and other employment benefits. The federal government should do the same.
- **Ensure that everyone can serve.** I believe that the military needs to rethink the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. It does not serve this country to discriminate against people who want to serve in our armed forces. I would ask the military to craft and implement a policy that ensures that everyone who wants to serve their country is permitted to do so with honor and dignity. I would ask the military to look seriously at the British policy, which prohibits sexual misconduct by both heterosexuals and homosexuals. I would then submit the new policy to Congress to replace the current “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law.
- **Ensure access to affordable health care, including AIDS/HIV Services.** My health care proposal ensures that all Americans would have access to affordable health insurance – and sets aside funding for public health programs to improve prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

As President, I will fight for the civil rights of all Americans. That includes lesbian and gay Americans.