

All Families Matter



The Gatto Family



The Elsasser-Robinson Family

Families Have Common Needs

American families are diverse and valuable — whether they are traditional, single parent, grandparent-led, gay parents or same-gender without children. All kinds of families have common needs for support, including a desire for safe communities, access to good schools, health care for children and working parents, child care, services for the elderly and help for families living in economic distress.

Last month, the New Jersey Supreme Court spoke in unanimous voice, recognizing that gay and lesbian people should have the same access to the protections of marriage as non-gay people. The Court also recognized that “children have the same universal needs and wants, whether they are raised in a same-sex or opposite-sex family, yet under the current system, they are treated differently.” The court further said:

“Gays and lesbians work in every profession, business, and trade. They are educators, architects, police officers, fire officials, doctors, lawyers, electricians, and construction workers. They serve on township boards, in civic organizations, and in church groups that minister to the needy. They are mothers and fathers. They are our neighbors, our co-workers, and our friends.”

All of us today are called to support the diverse kinds of families that Americans are forming — we must respond fairly to all people with common needs. Know the facts.

Facts about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Families

- US Census confirms that same-sex couples live in 99.3%¹ of America’s counties, and that they are racially diverse and frequently raising children. Two-thirds (66%) of Latina same-sex couples, for example, are raising children.²
- Unmarried partners are 2–3 times more likely to be without health insurance than married partners. Providing employment-related health insurance to domestic partners would reduce the number of people in unmarried couples without health insurance by 30–43%.³
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)⁴, the American Academy of Family Physicians⁵, the Child Welfare League of America⁶, the National Association of Social Workers⁷, and the American Psychological

Association⁸ recognize that gay and lesbian parents are as qualified and nurturing as heterosexual parents, and that children thrive in gay- and lesbian-headed families. As the American Academy of Pediatrics report explains, “Children deserve to know that their relationships with both of their parents are stable and legally recognized. This applies to all children, whether their parents are of the same or opposite sex.”⁹ In spite of these findings, gay and lesbian families and their children today are denied the freedom to marry and the more than 1,000 rights and responsibilities that flow from marriage under federal law.¹⁰

- Bias-motivated harassment and violence remain pervasive problems. A recent national survey found 90% of LGBT students have been harassed or assaulted over the past year.¹¹ According to the FBI, crime motivated by bias based on actual or perceived sexual orientation is the third most prevalent form of bias-related crime nationwide.¹²
- Like the rest of America’s seniors, elderly LGBT people have additional challenges and needs. Lesbian and gay seniors, however, are five times *less* likely to access needed social services than the non-gay senior population. One reason: in a survey of 24 federal Area Agencies on Aging serving seniors, 46% said that LGBT seniors would not be welcome at senior centers if their sexual orientation were known.¹³

To Learn More

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and families live everywhere and deserve basic human rights. Like others, they seek job security, freedom from harassment and violence, non-discrimination in housing and government services, protections for their families, and the freedom to marry. LGBT families want the same ability to contribute to, and participate in, all that our society has to offer. Despite these families’ contributions and needs, only one-tenth of one percent of all foundation dollars comes to their aid.¹⁴ We thank those who are meeting the challenge to end discrimination and promote progress. And we invite all members of the nonprofit and philanthropic community to learn more and do more to meet the real needs of all families.

To find out more, and how you can get involved, please email us at AllFamiliesMatter@lgbtfunders.org.



The Watson-Hutchin Family

Footnotes: For data and documentation, please see *All Families Matter* at www.lgbtfunders.org

FUNDERS FOR LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES WWW.LGBTFUNDERS.ORG