



## Ways to Protect Same-Sex Relationships: A Comparison

	<b>Portability</b>	<b>Federal Law</b>	<b>Availability</b>	<b>Benefits Provided</b>
<b>Marriage</b>	Portable, i.e. those married in one state are recognized as married in every other state.	Federal protections conferred by 1,138 federal laws and policies, such as Social Security, family medical leave, federal taxation and immigration policy.	Available in all states, unless couple is same-sex. Massachusetts allows resident same-sex couples to marry since May 17, 2004.	The broadest array of federal and state benefits including: Social Security benefits; inheritance; Medicaid spend-down protections; the right to take family leave under federal law; the right to file federal taxes jointly; the right to sponsor a partner for immigration; and many others.
<b>Civil Unions</b>	Unclear to what extent are portable, i.e. those who have entered into a civil union in Vermont or Connecticut most likely lose some or all the benefits of their status when they enter another state. To date, civil unions have not been recognized by other states.	No federal rights, responsibilities or protections.	Available only in Vermont and Connecticut, and only to same-sex couples.	Provides access to all state benefits in Vermont and Connecticut.
<b>Domestic Partnerships</b>	Most commonly not portable.	No federal protections.	Available in many states and cities. Provisions vary widely; CA, NJ and ME offer most comprehensive protections.	Benefits can include health care, hospital visitation, the right to meet with your nonbiological child's teacher.

Founded in 1973, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is the oldest national organization working to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people at the local, state and national level. The Task Force trains activists and leaders and organizes broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation. The Task Force Policy Institute, the community's premiere think tank, researches and reports on critical policy issues. As part of a broader social justice movement for freedom, justice and equality, the Task Force is creating a world that respects and celebrates the diversity of human expression and identity where all people may fully participate in society. For more information on the Task Force, log on to <http://www.TheTaskForce.org>