

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Submission to the  
Evidence Amendment Bill 2008  
Inquiry**

To whom it may concern:

I strongly support the Government's intention to remove discrimination against same-sex couples in federal law. As part of its commitment to removing such discrimination, I note the above Bill has been referred to the Senate and Legal Affairs Committee for its review.

Removal of discrimination against same-sex couples is an important human rights issue deserving of bipartisan support in Parliament. I note the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has already conducted a thorough inquiry into the discrimination faced by same-sex couples and their families. I believe it is unnecessary to replicate any aspect of this inquiry and further delay the removal of this discrimination.

1. I strongly support the HREOC recommendation to expand the definition of de facto partner to include same-sex partners. I strongly oppose any attempt to mischaracterise same-sex partners as interdependants. Recognising loving, committed same-sex relationships in the same way as equivalent opposite-sex relationships is the most appropriate way to treat same-sex relationships with dignity and respect. To mischaracterise same-sex relationships as interdependent relationships, is to attempt to keep same-sex relationships in the legislative closet. In principle, eliminating discrimination against interdependent partners is valid. However, this should not be allowed to delay the removal of discrimination against same-sex partners.
2. Same-sex defacto couples should not be compelled to provide evidence against one another. This is an important recognition of the special status of a loving relationship between two committed individuals to a shared life. I support these amendments in the Evidence Bill 2008.

As one same-sex partner told the HREOC Inquiry "I am a first-class taxpayer but second-class citizen". This encapsulates why removal of discrimination against same-sex couples warrants full support of the Senate. As a society, Australian laws should not treat any of our citizens as second class citizens.

Yours sincerely



Richard John MOORE