

The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.

Dear Senators,

I fully support the SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS BILL because it gives full equality to same-sex couples as recommended by the Human Right and Equality Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Report.

I fully agree with the terminology of the Bill which gives same-sex couples the same standing and entitlements as heterosexual de facto couples.

I do not consider that the Bill in any way weakens or undermines the legally established definition of marriage.

I agree with the Human Rights Commission that the Opposition's proposal to group same-sex couples with "interdependent relationships" such as "two unmarried sisters living together", or "a woman giving up marriage and family for life to care for an invalid brother" wrongly characterizes them as asexual, carer relationships, and does not provide full equality with heterosexual de facto couples.

I fully support the Attorney-General's plan to consider these other, highly esteemed, forms of relationship when the Government is making provision for carers.

I urge the Senate to pass this legislation, in its present form, as soon as possible, as the delay is causing anxiety for many elderly and frail recipients of Commonwealth superannuation.

I have been married to the same man for 37 years, and am the mother of two and grandmother of two. I believe that same-sex couples should enjoy the same rights under the law as I do.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Harris