



The issue:

IMMIGRATION

Nearly 36,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans are in binational couples.



damn facts

Family immigration accounts for more than half of all green cards and immigrant visas granted each year—but gay and lesbian couples are excluded.¹¹

Nearly 36,000 gay Americans are in binational couples.¹² Forty-six percent are raising children together.¹³

Fifty-four percent of Americans support allowing a foreign-born gay partner of an American citizen to become a U.S. citizen.¹⁴

Around the world, 19 countries have immigration laws that allow their gay citizens to sponsor foreign-born partners for immigration purposes.¹⁵

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Family or Country? That's No Choice at All: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IMMIGRATION!

Nearly 36,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans are in binational couples.¹ These are mature, law-abiding couples in committed relationships: The average age of these couples is 39.² Nearly half are raising children together.³

Under U.S. immigration law, married American citizens or permanent residents may sponsor their foreign-born spouses and immediate family members for immigration purposes. These account for more than half of all green cards and immigrant visas granted each year.⁴

But our country's immigration system does not allow gay Americans to sponsor their partners for U.S. residency. As a result, many gay couples are forced to split or consider drastic life changes, such as an international move, to stay together.

These Americans end up having to choose the person they love or the country they love. It's not much of a choice at all.

WHY YOU SHOULD GIVE A DAMN ABOUT IMMIGRATION!

The fact is, our immigration laws affect not just binational couples, but everyone.⁵ Consider that:

These laws hurt real families. Committed couples are forced to live in separate countries, and children are forced to live without one of their parents. If a couple decides to move abroad to stay together, they must halt their careers, uproot their children, say good-bye to family and friends, and start over in a new country. In either case, families—and innocent children—get caught in the crosshairs.

They hurt extended families. Gay Americans who are forced to move abroad often must leave behind aging parents. Yet informal caregivers, such as children and grandchildren, provide 80% of the long-term care of older adults in this country.⁶

They hurt the economy. These couples make a real contribution to the country's economy. Whether they own their own businesses or are employed by a company, when these couples are forced to move out of the country, the economy—and individual American businesses that lose quality employees—is affected. And the U.S. loses talented, tax-paying citizens.

Ultimately, comprehensive immigration reform that considers the needs of all families is not just good for binational gay families—but also good for the U.S.

WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS ABOUT IMMIGRATION!

Broad support exists for comprehensive immigration reform that considers the needs of gay binational families. Fifty-four percent of Americans, for example, say that a foreign-born gay partner of an American citizen should be allowed to become a U.S. citizen.⁷



www.hrc.org

The Human Rights Campaign is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization.



www.immigrationequality.org

Immigration Equality is a nonprofit advocacy and legal aid organization serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive immigrants and their families.

Multiple organizations support immigration reform that includes provisions for gay couples. They include:

- Episcopalian, Methodist, Jewish, Presbyterian and other faith communities
- The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
- American Families United
- Service Employees International Union
- The National Immigrant Justice Center.⁸

Finally, 20 countries around the world have already embraced equality in their immigration laws.⁹ None, incidentally, have reported any issues with fraud related to allowing gay couples to sponsor foreign-born partners.

HOW WE CAN ADDRESS THE INEQUALITY IN IMMIGRATION!

The Uniting American Families Act (UAFSA) would allow a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident to sponsor a same-sex permanent partner and their children for immigration. To qualify as permanent partners, foreign-born nationals would have to:

- Be at least 18 years old and in an intimate, committed relationship with another adult who is not a blood relative
- Be financially interdependent with their partner
- Be unable to enter into a marriage that is recognized by the Immigration and Naturalization Act with that partner.¹⁰

RIGHT THING TO DO!

We need to fight for equality in our immigration laws. It's the right thing to do.

Because no one should have to choose between family and country.

And no family should have to be torn apart because of laws that don't take into the account the needs of *all* of our families and children.

It's time for things to change.

WE GIVE A DAMN. DO YOU?

I GIVE A DAMN ABOUT IMMIGRATION! Now What?

- **JOIN THE GIVE A DAMN CAMPAIGN:** The Give A Damn Campaign is for everybody who cares about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality, especially all you straight people out there!
 - Register now at www.wegiveadamn.org
- **GET INFORMED:** Learn more about the issues.
 - Watch a Damn Video or read people's Personal Stories
 - Check out our Damn Blog, which is updated daily
- **GET INVOLVED:** Spread the word about equality to family and friends!
 - Share a Damn Video or tell us your Personal Story
 - Forward this PDF
- **VISIT OUR NON-PROFIT PARTNERS' WEBSITES**
 - Immigration Equality: www.immigrationequality.org
 - Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org

www.wegiveadamn.org

1-3 Human Rights Watch. "Family, Unvalued: Discrimination, Denial, and the Fate of Binational Same-Sex Couples under U.S. Law," May 2006. Gates, Gary. "Bi-National Same-Sex Unmarried Partners in Census 2000: A Demographic Portrait," The Williams Project on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy, UCLA School of Law, October 2005.

4 Human Rights Campaign. "International Rights & Immigration: FAQs," 2010. www.hrc.org

5 Immigration Equality. www.immigrationequality.org

6 SAGE. "It's About Time: LGBT Aging in a Changing World," SAGE Fourth National Conference on LGBT Aging, 2009. www.sage.org

7 Human Rights Campaign. "Talking Points: The Uniting American Families Act." www.hrc.org

8-9 See 5.

10 Human Rights Campaign. "Uniting American Families Act," March 17, 2009.

11 See 4.

12-13 See 1-3.

14 See 7.

16 See 10.