



UNITING AMERICAN FAMILIES ACT (UAFA)

The Problem

Under the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act, U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents may sponsor their spouses (and other immediate family members) for immigration purposes. But same-sex partners of U.S. citizens and permanent residents are not considered “spouses,” and their partners cannot sponsor them for family-based immigration. Consequently, many same-sex, bi-national couples are kept apart or torn apart.

The Solution

The Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) would remedy this injustice and allow U.S. citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their same-sex partners (called “permanent partners” in UAFA) for family-based immigration. The legislation amends the definitions sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act to include definitions for “permanent partner” and “permanent partnership.” UAFA defines “permanent partner” as an individual who is at least 18 years of age who is in a committed relationship with another individual at least 18 years of age who is not a first, second or third-degree blood relative, with the intent that this be a lifelong commitment. UAFA will provide lesbian and gay individuals the same opportunity as different-sex, married couples to sponsor their partner.

Catholic Support

- 69% believe homosexuality should be accepted by society. Public Religion Research Institute, 2011.
- 69% of Catholics favor the legalization of the basic rights accorded to married heterosexual couples for gays and lesbians in long-term committed relationships, such as hospital visitation rights, health insurance, and pension coverage. Public Religion Research Institute, 2009.

Catholic Talking Points

- American Catholics are an immigrant community and have defended the rights of new immigrants who are often Catholic, especially those immigrating because of oppression, poverty, and war.
- American Catholics believe in family unification regardless of religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.
- American Catholics respect the civil laws of the U.S. and other countries and believe that civil marriages should be respected and accorded full legal rights in the U.S.
- UAFA includes broad religious exemptions and does not apply to our church, nor any of our privately funded church organizations and programs.

Catholic Social Teaching and Scripture

- Catholic social teaching emphasizes the right of people to migrate, especially in situations of poverty, human rights abuse, and war.
- “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, *a stranger and you welcomed me*, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.”
– Matthew 25:35-36.

Catholic Constituent Faces of UAFA: Available upon request