



## POSITION STATEMENT

### Civil Unions, Domestic Partnerships, and Reciprocal Beneficiary Contracts

Focus on the Family maintains that the institution of marriage is intended by God to be a relationship between the two halves of humanity: a man and a woman. Further, nature attempts to provide every child with a mother and a father, and social science agrees that this is the family structure in which children thrive. For these reasons, we oppose any other legal definition of marriage.

The articulated goal of the homosexual-bisexual-transgender advocacy movement is same-sex marriage. In the meantime, it has been clearly stated that **Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships** are stepping stones to that end. Given the goal of redefining marriage, Focus on the Family opposes the legal creation of Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships as counterfeit policy attempts to imitate marriage. We further do not support the creation of special categories of rights based on sexual expression or gender identity.

Focus on the Family's position is strengthened by threats to the religious liberty rights of groups that disagree with this movement. In some instances, faith-based adoption and foster care agencies have decided to stop offering services due to the passage of civil union (or same-sex marriage) laws that require these agencies to place children in same-sex households — an act that would violate the organization's religious views.

Additionally, we view Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships as discriminatory. Civil union and Domestic partnership arrangements are based on sexual expression and are therefore unfair to non-sexual domestic situations with equally legitimate claims to contractual provisions. Government policies should not discriminate against *any* member of society in regard to housing, employment, inheritance rights or medical decision-making.

Caring for unmarried members of society does not require the redefinition of one-man, one-woman marriage. In lieu of Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships, a better approach may be **Reciprocal Beneficiary Contracts** that streamline existing benefits found in contract law, such as legal arrangements to co-own or inherit property, medical visitation and decision-making, guardianship of children, and medical benefits, if an employer allows. Such arrangements are equally available to any persons in domestic circumstances who do not qualify to marry. Furthermore, these contracts are not premised on the rights or privileges of marriage, sexual expression or gender identity.