

December 5, 1989

Dear Mr. Hahn:

A friend who is a federal prosecutor in Los Angeles recently sent me a newspaper article entitled, "Bias Against Single People Is Targeted." I hope you will direct the enclosed information to the task force. I am especially concerned because I was also a victim of archaic sex laws in the United States.

In Phoenix, I was denied the right to apply for a job as a juvenile probation officer because their Juvenile Court enforced a state misdemeanor law prohibiting cohabitation. I am sending a copy of a local news article that explains the incident in greater detail. I am still angry about this, and understand more first hand what the lack of freedom in a so-called 'free society' means. Since this incident, I have been collecting articles from around the United States describing similar cases where sex laws have been used against unmarried couples, straight or gay. I hope they have some benefit to your group.

I am currently doing all I can to leave New Mexico, which also has a state law prohibiting cohabitation. The ACLU in both New Mexico and Arizona were not interested in pursuing my case. We will hopefully be moving back to California within the next three months. I welcome your efforts to ensure I will be an 'equal citizen' there. I have made a commitment that I will never again live in a state with such offensive criminal laws.

One other issue your task force may wish to investigate that would affect Californians, is the issue of unemployment benefits. In both Arizona and New Mexico, I was denied 'good cause' for quitting my job to move to a new state with my housemate/boyfriend of eight years. My unemployment benefits were denied for six weeks each time we moved, in one case when he was transferred to another state by the same company. We really felt the intent behind this law was one of 'religious morality', as a way to punish those who are not married. It is my understanding that this is the usual policy in all states, and that if we had been married, I would have had good cause to quit, and received my benefits as soon as I applied.

Every single day of my life now, I reflect upon the fact that I am considered a sex offender in the state I live in. As my enclosed recommendations hopefully show, in Alaska I was able to spend my skills and energy into helping victims and convicting people who were real sex offenders. I feel that I should have the right to live with whomever I wish, in the type of consensual association I find right for me, without the threat of discrimination by an employer, mortgage company, landlord or my government. I no longer feel I have the freedoms that most Americans feel they can take for granted. If there is anything I can do to assist your task force in any way, please feel free to contact me.

In addition, if you know of any agencies needing a victim advocate/ paralegal/ investigator who is hardworking and skilled in her job, but cohabitates, please let me know. I will be breathing a big sigh of relief when I reach California, thanks to people like yourself.

Respectfully,

Debbie Deem

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