

**Written Testimony by
Frank S. Page, Ph.D.
Regarding H.R. 2517, an Act
"To provide certain benefits to domestic partners of Federal Employees."**

Dear Committee on Federal Work Force, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia,

Every person, entity, and institution comes to a crossroads moment in their existence. I believe that this may come at various times in the life of an individual. History shows that there are such points in the existence of every civilization as well as every country. Even a committee such as this comes to crossroads moments where their action or inaction can determine their future destiny as well as make a dramatic impact upon the destiny of others. I believe that our country is at such a moment, and I believe that this committee has the opportunity to influence our country in either very positive or very negative direction.

It has always been the role of government, at whatever level that might be, to encourage responsibility, to stand alongside other institutions and entities which work for the common good of the people. It has also been a clear and historical precedent that the government encourages time honored practices such as marriage and family. States have always been given the right to discern the makeup of those definitions. We are well aware that there is a strong movement in our nation today to redefine the definition of marriage and family.

The bill which is being considered at this point, H.R. 2517, continues the agenda that has been set forth by a very small yet vocal minority in our country.

I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2517 for the following reasons. I reiterate that this is important not only to me but to a huge number of evangelicals as well as others in our country who value a traditional definition of marriage and family.

1. It undermines moral values - the federal government will be directly engaged in the encouragement and support of behavior that is contrary to biblical and moral teaching that sexual behavior is only appropriate in heterosexual marriage.

2. It furthers the normalization of homosexual behavior in our culture - the evangelical community is largely opposed to homosexual behavior. This bill creates a greater social acceptance of homosexual behavior.

3. It authorizes discrimination, by its very definition of a domestic partner, the bill excludes heterosexual couples who are not married from receiving the same benefits. While I am not advocating the extension of benefits to them as a remedy, the discriminatory effects of the bill are evident. It also excludes family members who are living together in a non-sexual relationship who meet all the other criteria for receiving benefits. In an error in which discrimination is seen as the worst sin of all, why was this bill which is so obviously discriminatory being promoted at all?

4. It undermines the crucial social institution of marriage - the federal government has historically encouraged heterosexual marriage because it has recognized the indispensable role it plays in the stability of the nation. Its support for the unique value of heterosexual marriage to national wellbeing will be certainly diminished if this bill is passed.

5. It weakens arguments in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act - the federal government will be providing benefits to same-sex couples in which one member works

for it that it denies to same-sex couples who do not work for it. This is likely going to be perceived as untenable, eventually.

6. If we are truly concerned about equality, we must acknowledge that this bill as crafted would actually make the test for homosexual couples less stringent than for heterosexual couples. Thus, as stated before, it diminishes the government's historical support and value of heterosexual marriages.

7. The terms used to define exactly what a domestic partnership is are extremely vague - what is intimacy, or commitment? These terms are open to broad interpretation, and could easily apply to a roommate. Abstract, conceptual definitions are no substitute for specific legal definitions.

I truly believe that this bill will open up a probability for massive fraud and wastefulness of spending. Of all times to pull back from excessive spending, it is now. The responsibility for the stipulations regarding marriage is shared between the courts and federal government, along with the religious entity in most cases. Here, the only binding document is a "statement of dissolution" and an "affidavit of eligibility".

The concerns are deep and the possibility of financial waste and abuse is real. This committee has the ability and responsibility to encourage both physical responsibility and societal respect for traditional marriage and family. It is my hope that the crossroads moment of this committee, as well as our nation, will not be missed for the positive wellbeing of our nation and the protection of its future.

Compiled with the assistance of Barrett Duke of the Southern Baptist Convention,
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