



***Forum For Equality***

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January 28, 2009

Senator Sharon Broome  
Chairwoman, Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family  
P.O. Box 52783  
Baton Rouge, LA 70892

Dear Senator Broome,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chair of the Governor's Commission on Marriage and Family. Members of the Forum For Equality strongly believe that the stability of American families is integral to the health of our society. We hope that the commission takes this opportunity to make meaningful and fair-minded recommendations on strengthening ALL of Louisiana's families.

As you know, families come in all shapes and sizes. Some include children and some do not. Some families have the benefit of marriage, and some do not. Some involve a man and a woman, and some involve couples of the same sex. Some families involve a single parent and a child or children.

Louisiana's families also include thousands of "non-traditional" households where children are being raised by someone other than a birth parent (sometimes a relative, foster or adoptive parent or in some cases single or partnered gay or lesbian parents). All of these families are important and all deserve the support of your Commission.

The Forum For Equality is disappointed to note that a large number of Commission members have a long history of being openly hostile to gay families and individuals in Louisiana. We are concerned that non-married/non-traditional parents/families may be ignored, or worse yet, harmed by your Commission, or its recommendations if enacted.

We note that your own legislative record is in opposition to our organization's goals of equal treatment of all citizens. Nevertheless, the Commission's responsibilities are much broader than the ideological view of an individual or few. The commission's objective should be to strengthen ALL Louisiana families.

Towards that goal, Forum For Equality Louisiana requests to make a presentation on gay families to the entire Commission, which will include the latest scientific data from recognized professional family and child organizations. The scientific data is clear that gay couples and individuals do just as good of a job of raising successful and healthy children as do heterosexual couples and individuals.

We make this request because we are mindful that fundamentalist reactionary organizations are now attempting to pass legislation around the country that would ban adoptions by gay couples. This is their latest mean-spirited attempt to hurt gay families. However, it would be a tragic mistake to deprive future adoptive children of loving and nurturing homes because of the political agenda of those who seek to hurt gay people. Instead, the best interests of the child should be the standard for determining adoptions, and that decision-making is best left with licensed homestudy agencies, adoption agencies and the courts.

I will contact your office in one week to see if you have any questions about this request, and hopefully to schedule a time for us to make a presentation to the full Commission. Should you wish to contact me, I can be reached at (504) 569-9156.

Respectfully,

Kenny Tucker  
Chairman, *Forum For Equality Louisiana*

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