

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 1, 2006

Become an Original Cosponsor of The Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 2006

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join with us in re-introducing the Domestic Partner Benefits and Obligations Act, a bill that would put the federal government on a par with a majority of Fortune 500 companies by extending employee benefit programs to cover the domestic partners of federal employees to the same extent as those benefits cover spouses of federal employees.

A large and growing number of America's major corporations, as well as state and local governments and educational institutions, have extended their employee benefit programs to cover their employees' committed domestic partners. For example, over half of Fortune 500 companies now offer health benefits to employees' domestic partners, up from just 25% in 2000. Overall, more than 8000 private-sector companies make such benefits available to employees' domestic partners, as do several hundred state and local governments and colleges and universities. These employers include top American corporations across the country, such as GE, Chevron, Boeing, Texas Instruments, Hospital Corporation of America, Lockheed Martin, Duke Energy Corp., and BellSouth, as well as the governments of 13 states and 139 cities and towns, from Juneau, Alaska to Atlanta, Georgia, and from Portland, Maine to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In surveys, non-federal employers report that the reasons they cover employees' domestic partners are to boost recruitment and retention of employees, as well as, of course, to be fair. The Federal Government is in competition with these same companies and state and local governments for qualified personnel, yet federal agencies cannot match the domestic-partner benefits offered by major non-Federal employers.

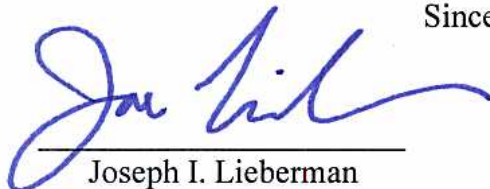
Under the Domestic Partner Benefits and Obligations Act, a federal employee and same-sex domestic partner, who are not related by blood and are living together in a committed intimate relationship, would be eligible to participate in federal retirement benefits, life insurance, health benefits, workers' compensation, and Family and Medical Leave to the same extent as married employees and their spouses. Such employees and their domestic partners would likewise assume the same obligations as apply to married employees and their spouses, such as anti-nepotism rules and financial disclosure requirements.

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Employers have found that the cost of including domestic partners in an employee benefit package turns out to be well worth it. Coverage of domestic partners is no more expensive than coverage of other beneficiaries. Based on the experience of private companies and state and local governments, CBO has estimated that offering benefits for same-sex domestic partners of federal employees should increase the cost of those programs by less than one half of one percent.

If you wish to be an original cosponsor of the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 2006, or if you have any questions about this legislation, please contact Larry Novey on Senator Lieberman's staff at phone extension 4-2627, or Lori Prater on Senator Smith's staff at phone extension 4-3753.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Gordon H. Smith
United States Senator