



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN<sup>™</sup>

April 9, 2009

The Honorable Fortney Pete Stark  
U.S. House of Representatives  
239 Cannon Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Stark,

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign and our more than 750,000 members and supporters nationwide, we are writing to express our support of the Family Leave Insurance Act of 2009 (H.R. 1723). The Act, which would expand the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to provide paid leave for all workers to care for their families – including families headed by same-sex couples – is a necessary and welcome improvement to the FMLA. As the nation's largest organization dedicated to working towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, we applaud your leadership and attention to the needs of *all* working families.

The passage of the FMLA, which provides workers with up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave each year to care for certain close family members or to address serious personal health concerns, was a groundbreaking step forward for millions of Americans. However, FMLA coverage is still incomplete. Under current law, millions of lesbian and gay Americans in committed, long-term relationships are unable to take leave to care for their same-sex partner. While some states and private employers have filled this gap in coverage by offering family medical leave for workers to care for a domestic partner, an expansion of the FMLA is needed in order to cover millions of unprotected American families.

The Family Leave Insurance Act of 2009 remedies this glaring inequality by providing essential benefits to employees seeking to take leave to care for a domestic partner and their children. The Act gives access not only to crucial FMLA leave benefits for families headed by lesbian and gay couples, but also ensures this leave will be paid. Such leave will allow all working families the opportunity to provide care when it is needed most. The Act values the American family in all of its diverse forms.

This benefit will also provide relief to low income workers, considerably improving their lives, the health of their families, and their ability to spend vital time with new children. The Act's method of wage replacement is a fair means of distributing funds in the insurance system, guaranteeing that those who need paid leave most have access to it. This Act not only grants necessary leave to families, but also gives them the ability to take it.

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign and our more than 750,000 members and supporters nationwide who will benefit from this legislation, we want to thank you for your leadership on LGBT family issues. We look forward to working with you to pass this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Solmonese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joe" being more prominent and the last name "Solmonese" following in a similar style.

Joe Solmonese  
President