



## News and Current Events :: John Kerry-Edwards Official View on Gays/Lesbians

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Excerpt from the johnkerry.com official website:

With a 100% rating from the Human Rights Campaign since 1995, John Kerry is a powerful voice in the ongoing fight for civil rights for gay and lesbian Americans.

### Preventing Hate Crimes

John Kerry is an original cosponsor of the Hate Crimes Prevention bill, which would extend federal jurisdiction over serious, violent hate crimes. These would include crimes motivated by sexual orientation. Hate crimes rose a disturbing 3.5% from 1999 to 2000.

### Ending Discrimination

One of John Kerry's first acts as a U.S. Senator, in 1985, was to introduce a bill prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. He supports passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and has adopted a nondiscrimination policy for his Congressional offices based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

### Protecting Gay and Lesbian Families

John Kerry believes that same-sex couples should be granted rights, including access to pensions, health insurance, family medical leave, bereavement leave, hospital visitation, survivor benefits, and other basic legal protections that all families and children need. He has supported legislation to provide domestic partners of federal employees the benefits available to spouses of federal employees. He was one of 14 Senators -- and the only one up for reelection in 1996 -- to oppose the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

### Lifting the Ban on Gays in the Military

John Kerry opposed the Clinton Administration's "Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy." He was one of a few senators to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee and call on the President to rescind the ban on gay and lesbian service members.

### Support for Civil Unions

John Kerry supports same-sex civil unions so that gay couples can benefit from the health benefits, inheritance rights, or Social Security survivor benefits guaranteed for heterosexual couples.