

**News and Current Events :: Cohabiting still illegal in 7 states**

Cohabiting still illegal in 7 states - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/7/21 2:37

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The almost 1 million unmarried heterosexual Americans who live together in Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Virginia and West Virginia are violating state laws against "lewd and lascivious" cohabitation. Such laws are remnants of an earlier era; North Carolina's is vintage 1805. And although they remain on the books, anti-cohabitation laws are rarely enforced.

But a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of North Carolina's statute is making its way through the courts and is drawing new attention to these old laws.

"The idea that government criminalizes people's choice to live together out of wedlock in this day and age defies logic and common sense," says Jennifer Rudinger, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina, which filed suit on behalf of Debora Hobbs.

Hobbs is an unmarried woman who lost her job with the Pender County Sheriff's Department because she and her boyfriend live together. Representatives for both Hobbs and Sheriff Carson Smith say neither is discussing the case.