



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ISSUE: MANAGEMENT REFORMS ARE REQUIRED WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO ALLOW LGBT FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS TO SERVE IN US FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGENCIES OPENLY AND WITHOUT CONCERN FOR PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS OR THE BASIC SAFETY OF THEIR SAME-SEX PARTNERS OR SPOUSES.

POLICY DESCRIPTION: We need to ensure that LGBT diplomats, who can serve as powerful role models in their foreign postings, remain in the Foreign Service. To ensure that they can do so, State Department personnel policies that discriminate against LGBT employees must be redressed. (Not all of these State-specific policies were covered by the Domestic Partners Benefits and Obligations bill in the last Congress.) The US could also advance LGBT workplace equality substantially by applying equality principles to those private sector contractors that receive US government funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE:

The White House and the State Department should announce support for efforts to ensure equal benefits for federal employees' domestic partners, including by addressing inequities unique to Foreign Service. Consult Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA) in the review process.

Require that all US government contractors and recipients of US government funding similarly grant benefits to domestic partners.

PROCESS FOR MAKING CHANGES: Some of these changes will require legislative action, at minimum by enacting legislation with the protections that were included in the Domestic Partners Benefits and Obligations bill in the last Congress. But that bill did not include all of the overseas service benefits that are ultimately needed to remove all impediments to equal service by LGBT diplomats in the US Foreign Service. GLIFAA should be consulted for a more complete list of unique overseas benefits and protections that need to be addressed.

Although Congressional action will be required to fully entrench these new policies, in all cases the next President and the next Secretary of State could take important intermediary steps to



*A new beginning: Policy recommendations to improve the lives of LGBT people and eliminate
discrimination from federal policies*

advance each policy objective, while simultaneously working with a new Congress to secure a more permanent calibration of these policies and commitments in US law. Many benefits that are unique to the Foreign Service, including security, language and cultural training, as well as overseas access to US embassy services, could be provided on an interim basis by the Secretary of State while comprehensive legislation is pending.