

Unmarried America



Federal Issues Affecting Unmarried America

The Nation's New Unmarried Majority is Burdened by Marital Status Discrimination

Unmarried Households Become a Majority in 13 States, 300 Cities, and Soon the Nation

Reports from the Census Bureau show a continuing increase in the percent of households in the United States headed by unmarried adults.

In 1950, unmarried Americans headed up 22% of the nation's households. The percent increased to 30% by 1970, 40% by 1980, and 44% by 1990. The 2000 Census documented that 48.3% of American households were then headed by unmarried adults. The annual survey done by the Census Bureau in the year 2001 estimated that unmarried Americans headed 49.4% or nearly half of U.S. households that year.

Recent data from the Census Bureau also shows that 26 United States Senators represent states with "unmarried majority" households, and that 113 members of the House of Representatives have "unmarried majority" districts. Mayors in more than 300 cities in the nation preside over unmarried majority communities.

With unmarried Americans soon heading up a majority of the nation's households, their elected representatives should seek information about the needs of this large voting population. On Sept. 22, 2003, we are conducting an informational briefing in the Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building to share important information with members of Congress so they can better serve their communities.

Your constituents will be pleased to learn that you or your staff attended this briefing by Unmarried America.



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Helping You make Informed Decisions

Supreme Court Rules that U.S. Constitution Protects Liberty of Unmarried Americans

During National Unmarried and Single Americans Week – Sept. 21 - 27, 2003 – Unmarried America will be in Washington D.C. for a variety of activities, including the filming of an historic documentary: "Unmarried America: A New Majority for the New Millennium."



One segment will film a conversation among members and staff of our organization on the steps of the United States Supreme Court. We will discuss the decision issued this year in *Lawrence v. Texas* in which the court ruled that the United States Constitution guarantees and protects the

"liberty" interests of all Americans regardless of their marital status.

The lead opinion in *Lawrence* was written by Justice Anthony Kennedy. As he and a majority of justices affirmed that unmarried adults have constitutional rights, they quoted with approval the following language written by Justice John Paul Stevens in an earlier ruling:

"[I]ndividual decisions by married persons, concerning the intimacies of their physical relationship, even when not intended to produce offspring, are a form of 'liberty' protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Moreover, this protection extends to intimate choices by unmarried as well as married persons."

The clear import of the court's decision in *Lawrence* is that the promise of liberty applies to everyone regardless of marital status. It is time for all federal elected officials, and candidates for federal office, to embrace this principle and to develop plans to protect all Americans from unfair marital status discrimination.