



## UNMARRIED AMERICA, the Newsletter of the American Association for Single People

### Unmarried Households Soon a 'New Majority'

The 2000 U.S. Census reported that unmarried adults headed up a majority of households in more than 300 cities. The same was true for six states: Louisiana (51.1%), Massachusetts (51.0%), Mississippi (50.2%), Nevada (50.3%), New York (53.4%), and Rhode Island (51.8%). In March 2000, 48.3% of the nation's households were labeled "unmarried."

More recent statistics show a continuing decline in married-couple households with a corresponding increase in those headed by single or unmarried adults.

According to the 2001 Annual Survey of more than 700,000 households in the nation, the Census Bureau estimates that during 2001, approximately 49.4% of all households in the United States were headed by unmarried Americans.

The Census Bureau now estimates that 13 states fall into the "unmarried majority" category. During 2001, seven more states were added to the list: California (50.5%), Florida (51.1%), Illinois (50.7%), Maryland (50.9%), New Mexico (50.6%), Ohio (50.3%), and South Carolina (50.1%).

Four other states which were on the verge of having "unmarried majority" households in 2001 may have already crossed over by now: Arizona (49.9%), Colorado (49.6%), Oregon (49.8%) and Washington (49.8%).

The transformation of the nation's households from a "married majority" to an "unmarried majority" has implications

for businesses, government programs, and political campaigns.

Businesses giving discounts to families - such as gyms, community recreation centers, auto insurers, membership groups, and auto clubs -- will need to broaden the definition of "family" to include household members not related by blood or marriage. Costco, AAA, AARP, and Ballys have moved in that direction.

Employers will need to readjust employee benefits programs so that solo singles, unmarried workers living with relatives, single parents with adult children at home, and domestic partners are not shortchanged.

Government programs which impose taxes or confer benefits will need to be reevaluated for fairness to members of the new unmarried majority. This includes income tax exemptions and deductions, joint filing privileges, social security taxes, and the so-called federal death tax.

Political parties and candidates will need to target audiences beyond married couples and traditional families. Politics of inclusion should include the reality that a new unmarried majority is emerging.

AASP has been studying these demographic trends and monitoring the needs of unmarried Americans for several years. We are ready and willing to assist political leaders and corporate executives as they prepare for a new era in American living arrangements - an era in which unmarried Americans are treated fairly as workers, consumers, and taxpayers. ΔΔΔ

### Housing Bias is a Persistent Problem

Federal law does not prohibit marital status discrimination in housing and public accommodations and most states lack legal protections against such bias.

As a result, single people are often without a legal basis to protest such unfair practices by landlords, condominium associations, motels, and zoning administrators.

AASP has become aware of many cases of housing bias in recent months. Each shows a need for consumers to be aware of their rights under existing law and to lobby for new laws where there is an absence of current legal protection.

Consider these cases:

Two Alabama law students sharing a house were forced to move due to a zoning law limiting occupants to members of a "family".

An Oregon bed and breakfast inn blatantly discouraged unmarried couples from renting a room; a sign in front of a motel in Idaho exclaimed "no unmarried couples".

A "single family" zoning law in Provo, Utah prohibits a home owner from sharing a residence with more than two other unrelated adults.

A heterosexual man in New York complains that his condo association won't let him share his three bedroom unit with a roommate because they are not members of a "family".

Marital status is an arbitrary basis to deny housing to tenants, homeowners, and consumers. That is why all federal, state, and local laws should prohibit such unfair practices.