

# Unmarried America



Newsletter of the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR SINGLE PEOPLE

## Six Fortune 500 Companies Receive Leadership Awards

Singles-Friendly Workplace Corporate Leadership Awards were sent on March 1, 2002, to the Human Resource Directors at six Fortune 500 companies.

The awards commend these employers for their leadership in creating a corporate climate which is more respectful of single and unmarried workers than the work environments at most public agencies and private-sector employers.

"The fact that the Human Resource Managers at many of the Fortune 500 companies took the time to respond to our 'Singles Friendly Workplace Survey' shows that these companies care about their unmarried workers," said Thomas F. Coleman, Executive Director of AASP.

"But what really sets six of these companies apart is that they have adopted a variety of policies and programs which are indicative of a singles-friendly workplace," Coleman added.

Each of the six awardees have implemented four or more of the following policies: adding marital status to the company's non-discrimination policy statement, including single people in the company's diversity program, adopting a work-life program, having flexible cafeteria-style benefits, giving domestic partner benefits, expressing a willingness to allow single workers to create a support group at work.

The six Fortune 500 companies receiving the award from AASP are: Cendant, Xerox, Fifth Third Bancorp, First Union Bank, Kellogg Company, and Viacom.

See *Workplace Awards*, pg. 4

## Setting Priorities for AASP in 2002

AASP celebrates its third anniversary this month. We've come a long way in three short years.

We have grown in membership, visibility, and credibility, and are now viewed by many corporate and political leaders as the nation's leading advocate for unmarried Americans.

The 2000 Census reports show that an evolution has occurred in America over the past few decades. Family diversity is now the norm – and single people play a vital role in our diverse society.

There were 82 million unmarried adults in the nation in 2000. Within a few short years, the majority of our households will be headed by single and unmarried adults.

However, many corporate and governmental regulations and policies have not kept pace with these social and economic changes. Unfortunately, many unmarried Americans feel they are not getting the respect they deserve as workers, taxpayers, voters, and citizens.

We have listened to what our members and visitors to our website have been saying. You feel that adjustments need to be made in social attitudes and economic policies so that single people are treated more equitably by society.

You have told us that you want respect and equitable treatment at work. You are willing to pay your fair share of taxes but you also want to receive your fair share of benefits. You want affordable health care for yourself and, if you live with loved ones, you want similar coverage for your immediate family household.

The list of wants and needs of unmarried Americans is long and varied. But three common themes seem to

dominate the wish list: equal pay for equal work, balance and fairness in taxation, and affordable health care.

The primary mission of AASP is to help secure a better future for single and unmarried Americans, whether they live alone or with friends or family members. We want to improve the quality of life for all single people.

To be effective, AASP must focus its resources in order to maximize the prospect of reaching attainable goals. We can not be all things to all people. But we can put the spotlight on the most pressing issues which concern the greatest number of single and unmarried Americans.

This is why we have chosen to make three issues our top priorities in 2002.

We will work with corporations to promote fairness



and equality in the workplace, especially in the distribution of employee benefits.

We will bring constituents together with elected officials and candidates to focus on reforms in tax policies. Many workers are currently taxed when they put an adult household member on their health plan at work. This must stop!

Also, we need to monitor Social Security reform plans. Something must be done because the current system seriously shortchanges unmarried workers.

New York Gov. George Pataki found a way to include single people in a state subsidized health plan for the working poor.

See *Setting Priorities*, pg. 12