

**SUPPORT Forever Homes for All Children
By Representative Rebecca Chavez-Houck
and Senator Scott McCoy**

Adoption decisions should be made by parents and professionals, not politicians. All children should be in loving homes.

Bill Summary: This bill 1) states that it is generally in a child's best interest to be adopted by a married couple, and 2) allows other candidates to apply.

- **Currently any single adult, gay or straight, can adopt children in Utah, but many couples can't.** Under current law, any single adult can be an adoptive or foster parent in Utah. But loving couples in a stable relationship are disqualified if they are unmarried. This nonsensical law discourages stable homes for children.
- **Children benefit from two loving parents.** Children with two parents are less likely to end up on CHIP, food stamps, and welfare than those with only one parent. Yet current law prohibits a parent from sharing rights and responsibilities with anyone other than a spouse
- **Parents have the right to choose who raises their children.** A parent knows what is in their child's best interests. Under current law, a parent can not designate someone they "cohabit" with as a second parent.
- **Married couples will have priority to adopt.** Under Adoption Amendments, a married couple will take priority over other candidates interested in adopting the child. But when no married couple is interested or qualified, other loving homes are available and should be considered.
- **Illustrating the Harm:** October 2007, a Utah court told Gregg and Mike Valdez that their four nieces and nephews would be taken away and placed in foster care because Gregg and Mike were cohabiting. The court could not consider that: 1) the mother wanted the children with Gregg and Mike, 2) The children were happy and healthy with their uncles, or 3) the children would likely be separated in foster care.

***Mainstream child health and social service authorities
unanimously support adoption by qualified gay couples:***

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Psychiatric Association

- American Psychological Association
- Child Welfare League of America
- Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute
- National Association of Social Workers
- North American Council on Adoptable Children
- Voice for Adoption