

SUPPORT HB 267 The Fair Housing and Employment Bill By Representative Christine Johnson

It's about people earning a living and feeling safe in their homes.

Bill Summary: Right now it is legal in Utah for people to be fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes just because they're gay or transgender. All Utahns should have the chance to provide for their families and stay in their homes without fear of being unjustly fired or evicted for reasons that have nothing to do with ability to work or pay rent.

- ♦ **Hardworking, high performing employees shouldn't be fired or evicted just because they are gay or transgender.** Workers should be judged by their job performance. Utahns who work hard and do their jobs shouldn't be fired just because they are gay. If they pay rent on time and maintain the property, they shouldn't fear losing their home just for being transgender. Every Utahn deserves the chance to earn a living and provide for their families.
- ♦ **Utahns support fair housing and employment.** According to a 2004 poll by . Seventy-two percent (72%) of Utahns support a fair housing and employment law that protects gay people. Also, twenty states have passed similar protections, including Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico.
- ♦ **Unfair employment and housing practices against gay and transgender people are prevalent.** Kourt Osborne was excited to attend Southern Utah University in the Spring of 2008. But only a month before classes started, administrators learned he was transgender and denied his application for on-campus housing. *Transgender Student Fights Denial of Housing at SUU*, Deseret News, Dec. 18, 2007. Unfortunately, Kourt's experience is common. Forty-three percent of gay people and most transgender people report experiencing barriers to housing and employment because of their orientation or identity.
- ♦ **This bill includes religious exemptions.** The Fair Housing And Employment Bill offers broad exemptions to religious organizations.

"The Church does not object to rights...regarding hospitalization and medical care, fair housing and employment rights, or probate rights," Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Newsroom, August 13, 2008, November 5, 2008.

"...[N]one of these proposals appears to pose a threat to traditional marriages. They would merely extend basic rights to all individuals. Fair is fair. And the Legislature shouldn't stand in the way." Salt Lake Tribune Editorial, November 21, 2008.

"It would be an honor for the First Unitarian Church to join [in support]. We have read the common ground initiatives and are in full agreement." Reverend Tom Goldsmith, November 21, 2008.

"Gay and lesbian people should not face discrimination in the workplace.... I support the concept of non-discrimination in hiring for gay and lesbian people." John McCain to Washington Blade, October 1, 2008.

Interview with Mitt Romney:

Russert: You said [in 1994] that you would sponsor [Sen. Ted Kennedy's federal] Employment Nondiscrimination Act. Do you still support it?

Romney: At the state level. I think it makes sense at the state level for states to put in provision of this.

Russert: Now, you said you would sponsor it at the federal level.

Romney: I would not support at the federal level, and I changed in that regard because I think that policy makes more sense to be evaluated or to be implemented at the state level.
Meet the Press December 16, 2007