



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 25, 2011

## New Bill Would Extend Federal Employment Benefits to Homosexual Partners

“The federal government must set an example as an equal opportunity employer,” the bill’s sponsor, lesbian Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) was quoted by [The Hill](#) as saying. “If we are to treat all federal employees fairly and recruit the best and the brightest to serve in government, we need this legislation.”



Predictably, among the bill’s co-sponsors were three other homosexual Democrats: David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Barney Frank (D-Mass.), and Jared Polis (D-Colo.). Also not surprisingly, Florida Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, added her signature to the bill’s sponsorship. The Hill reported that Ros-Lehtinen, “who has a transgendered daughter, has said recently that her views have evolved on gay and lesbian rights over the last several years. Earlier this year, Ros-Lehtinen supported a bill that would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a law she voted for in 1996 under which the federal government defines marriage as between a man and a woman.”

“I am pleased to co-sponsor this legislation,” declared Ros-Lehtinen of Baldwin’s bill, “because we are a nation that prides itself on treating everyone as equals and this bill assures that we bring those same ideals to the regulations that guide federal benefits for domestic partners of federal employees. We have taken steps to gain equal rights for all, but much remains to be done. Passage of this legislation will be one step in the right direction.”

Despite such rhetoric, passage of the bill will be barred by the Republican majority in the House who oppose it, as well as by DOMA itself, which mandates that only marriage between a man and a woman can be recognized by the federal government.

But Democrats are hard at work to rescind DOMA, most recently with the introduction by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) of the [Respect for Marriage Act](#), a bill that would give federal legalization of homosexual marriage. As reported by [The New American](#), in mid-November the Democrat-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee overwhelmingly approved Feinstein’s bill, historically marking “the first time a committee in either the Senate or the House has voted to repeal the 17-year-old [DOMA] law.” Without a majority in both houses of Congress, however, passage of Feinstein’s homosexual marriage



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bill will be postponed indefinitely.

Nonetheless, Democrats march gamely on with such efforts as Baldwin's bill, which found its companion introduction in the Senate through sponsorship by two non-Democrats: Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine), both leaders in the [Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee](#). "This legislation is the next step to achieving equity for the gay community," Lieberman intoned in a committee statement. Lieberman explained that the military's "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy was rescinded "because we want the best men and women America has to offer to defend our country. The same is true for federal employees: we want to attract the best men and women possible to serve in federal government. One way to do that is by offering competitive benefits to the family members of gay federal employees. This legislation makes good economic sense. It is sound policy. And it is the right thing to do."

Likewise, Collins insisted that the bill represents "both fair policy and good business practice. The federal government must compete with the private sector when it comes to attracting the most qualified, skilled, and dedicated employees. Today, health, medical, and other benefits are a major component of any competitive employment package. Indeed, private sector employers are increasingly offering these kinds of benefits as standard fare. Among Fortune 500 companies, for example, domestic partner benefits are commonplace."

According to the committee statement, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the cost of extending benefits to partners of homosexuals would be approximately \$70 million per year through 2020. "Considered as a share of the federal government's total budget for federal employees, this estimated cost would amount to only about two hundredths of a percent (0.0002)," explained the release.

According to The Hill, to counter the fraud to which the measure would be susceptible, a homosexual federal worker "would have to submit an affidavit attesting that he or she is in a same-sex domestic partner relationship. The affidavit must show they have a common residence (with some exceptions related to work or financial circumstances), that neither is married or in a domestic partner relationship with someone else, and that they generally share responsibility for a 'significant measure of each other's common welfare and financial obligations.'"



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