

Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans

1 Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is committed to the preservation of
2 rights for all people and vigorously condemns discrimination of any kind. As Zionists,
3 Hadassah members understand the dangers of bigotry.

4 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans face numerous forms of
5 discrimination in this country. They suffer brutal hate crimes, are often denied employment,
6 credit and housing and are often prevented from fostering or adopting children, all because of
7 their sexual orientation. Although several states have legislation protecting individuals from
8 some forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation, most do not. Perhaps the most
9 pervasive form of discrimination is the inequality under the law for gay and lesbian couples.
10 When a heterosexual couple forms a legal relationship, the couple is automatically granted
11 over 1,100 federal rights and benefits of marriage. For gay and lesbian couples, these benefits
12 are denied.

13 To right the wrongs of bias and discrimination against the LGBT community, Hadassah
14 supports the passage of state and federal civil rights legislation to protect against hate crimes
15 and discrimination based on sexual orientation.

16 Hadassah strongly opposes efforts at the federal and state level, whether through legislation,
17 referendum or constitutional amendment, that would selectively limit or deny civil rights to
18 same-sex couples and their families, thereby abusing the spirit of the amendment process and
19 discouraging further expansion of gay rights.

20 Hadassah believes that same-sex couples deserve equal protections under the law,
21 comparable to those afforded to heterosexual couples. Therefore, Hadassah supports
22 government action that provides civil status to committed same-sex couples and their
23 families equal to the civil status provided to the committed relationships of men and woman
24 and their families, with all associated legal rights and obligations, both federal and state.