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Right of Adoption for Same-sex Parents

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Reasons why gay couples have the right to have children

In November 2017, there are 27 countries with legalized marriage for same-sex couples (Trimble). Nevertheless, most countries do not allow same sex marriage and are strongly against same-sex marriage because the majority believe that same-sex marriage goes against the traditional form of marriage of one male and one female with children. However, the next problem same-sex couples are facing is that whether they have the right to have children. Most opponents believe that gay parents would affect children's sexual orientation (Family Research Council). This is an unsubstantiated idea. Gay and lesbian parents are not different from heterosexual parents. It is an absolute bias that people doubt and question gay parents. There is no actual reliable evidence that gay parents would turn their children's sexuality to homosexual because the environment is different from the others.

According to the latest statistics from the U.S. Census 2000, the National Survey of Family Growth 2002, and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System 2004, there are two million LGBT people that are interested in adoption. 65,500 adopted children are raised by a lesbian or gay parent, and four percent of adopted children in the United States are raised by lesbian and gay parents (Craft). Before 2010, there was already a majority of gay families (refer to same-sex parents with children.) The number of same-sex marriage with children has increased as time

goes on; it is not a rare case in the United States. In 2010, out of 594,000 same-sex couple households, 115,000 reported having children (Lofquist, 1).

There are a lot of concerns about homosexual parents. For example, some people believe that homosexuality is a mental disorder; lesbians are less maternal than heterosexual mother; the children would be mistreated by peers due to a homosexual family; and homosexual parents will not have enough time for children. Moreover, they believe children need a father and mother at the same time for a complete environment to grow up (“Ten Arguments From Social Science Against Same-Sex Marriage”).

First, homosexuality is not a mental illness. Although there is some theory about homosexuals, such as teenager or young adult who are homosexual have a greater risk to commit suicide (Mays & Cochran), there is not any evidence that can prove that homosexuality is a mental illness. The reason they commit suicide was because the depression, not because of sexual orientation. Despite the fact that exposure to prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation might cause acute distress, there is no reliable or trustworthy evidence that homosexual orientation itself impairs the function (“Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children.”). Nowadays, there is a lot of the published empirical research that clearly rebuts the notion that homosexuality *per se* is indicative of or correlated with psychopathology. Although some psychologists and psychiatrists still have negative personal attitudes about homosexuality, empirical evidence and professional norms do not support the idea that homosexuality is a form of mental illness (Herek).

Second, there are different roles in each couple. In most parental situations, one of them will be more concerned as a ‘father’ role, another will be more tender as a ‘motherly’ role. Although not every case is the same, there are different roles in a gay relationship. In other words,

there are no differences between homosexual parents and heterosexual parents. Do children need both a father and a mother? It is really unfair that opponents use this as an excuse to refuse the right of homosexual couples having children. Nowadays, there is a huge majority of single parents. Children who grow up in a single-parent family have no difference compared with the children who grow up in a traditional family. Furthermore, why would people doubt that the children who live in homosexual family are different from the other? This is true if there are two different roles in the family.

One takes the behavior of one's company. Children learn from the things they have seen, and the people they have met; that is a reason why children are quick learners. It is true that children usually tend to be like their parents with respect to hobbies, personality, life style etc. This is why people always say, "like father, like son". It is possible that they turn to the same as their parents who are homosexual because that is what they grow up in. They might unconsciously have the idea that it is common for them. However, there are many homosexual children who did not come from a homosexual family. Most of their parents or family are heterosexual, even their siblings. It is very unfair to think the homosexual parents will turn their children to homosexual just because they are. According to Patterson, the research suggests that the development of children's sexual identities who have lesbian mothers are same with heterosexual parents. The sexual identities include gender identity, gender-role behavior, and sexual orientation (23,30,51). This research proves that there is no difference between homosexual parents and heterosexual parents.

Fourth, one of concerns about the homosexual parents is that children of homosexual parents will experience difficulty in social relationships ("Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children."). For example, they might be stigmatized, teased, or otherwise victimized by peers in the schools. There is a problem with bullying while children studying at school in every country.

According to the CDC, suicide is one of the major causes of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year. Moreover, a study in Britain found that at least half of suicides among young people are related to bullying (“Bullying and Suicide”). In the age of school years, children usually speak without thinking of consequences; this is why children who have lesbian or gay parents might be bullied by peers. However, there is little data regarding these concerns that suggest that children of homosexual parents don’t have normal social relationships with peers. Furthermore, the “results of research suggest that the development, adjustment, and well-being of children with lesbian and gay parents do not differ markedly from that of children with heterosexual parents.” (“Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children.”). Being a kid who is different from the others might have more of a possibility of getting unequal treatments by peers. However, most of the cases are due to different reasons. For example, some students are bullied because they wear glasses, are less popular, are over or underweight, are of a different race or religion, are gay or lesbian, or have a disability. Students who are raised by same-sex parents would not be the only reason for facing difficulty in social relationships.

There are many benefits for children who have homosexual parents. For example, the education by homosexual parents will be better than heterosexual parents. “In fact, in some ways, gay parents may bring talents to the table that straight parents don’t.” (Pappas). Satoshi Kanazawa who is an evolutionary psychologist and author argued in the *Journal of Biosocial Science* that gay people are typically born with more intelligence than the average heterosexual (595-623). There are many intelligent gay people. For example, Michelangelo who exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western art, Sally Kristen Ride who was an American physicist and astronaut, James Baldwin who was an American writer and social critic and Tammy Baldwin who is the junior United States Senator (Senzee). There are so many talented homosexual people. The

children who grow up in a homosexual family might have a greater chance to get a better education than the children who have heterosexual parents. According to Abbie Goldberg, a psychologist at Clark University, gay parents “tend to be more motivated, more committed than heterosexual parents on average, because they chose to be parents.” (Pappas). It actually is an advantage for the children who have homosexual parents.

In an Australian Christian Lobby in 2015, Millie Fontana, a woman from Australia who grew up with two lesbian mothers, spoke about her experience and the reason why she thinks same sex marriage isn't good for children, and she claimed her testimony was “unheard of because nobody wants to hear about the other side of the rainbow.” (Fontana). She said she wanted a father when she was young, although she couldn't “articulate what a father was.” She claimed that her parents (two mothers) lied to her throughout the school, and told her she didn't have a father or they didn't know who the father was. She was seeking her biological father because she felt she had a missing part of herself, and she wanted a father figure. She felt stable when she met her father for the first time when she was 11 years old. She also talked on a ABC interview *You Can't Ask That*, “Having that understanding of who my father was would have benefited me to go into things like school...more confidently.” She claimed that children who have homosexual parents have the right to know who their biological parents are, and the LGBTQ community are trying to ignore the issues. Although the gay parents would not turn their children to different sexuality, however, the environment might affect the children developmentally while they are growing up.

This is accurate that we do not really think about what the children really want. However, the situation that Fontana has does not only happen in children who have homosexual parents but also the children who were adopted or only have single parents. A drama and autobiography movie *Lion*, which is directed by Garth Davis, was based on the true story of Saroo Brierley. Brierley is

an Indian-born Australian who was accidentally separated from his biological mother when he was five years old. After the separation, although he was adopted by an Australian couple, he still wants to find his biological family. Although he has the heterosexual adoptive parent, he still wants to find out his biological mother even though he almost forgot who his mother was. It is understandable how Fontana felt when she was not allowed to know her biological father, but it should not be the reason why a gay couple does not have the right to have children. It is unfair that a straight couple has the right to adopt children, but a gay couple does not. Every adopted child has the right to recognize their biological parents. It will be really hard for adoptive parents, as the movie *Lion* describes where Saroo's adoptive parents were mad and could not support him in finding his biological mother at first, but they respected him after he explained he still loves them. It is important that children have the right and opportunity to recognize their biological parents when the biological parents are willing to meet them.

“Family is Family. Parents are Parents. Love is Love.” (Rikki Beadle-Blair). Team Angelica Films, an entertainment company that makes films mainly about social issues, made a short interview with the children who are raised by homosexual parents, bi-sexual parents and heterosexual parents. Before those children introduced what kind of family they came from, they all talked about their dreams and goals. They do not have a specific or completely different opinion. Moreover, they asked the children who are being raised by gay parents if they found their home life unusual, and most of them answered no and that it is normal. According to Bos et al., although female same-sex parents reported more parenting stress, children with female same-sex parents and different-sex parents demonstrated no differences in outcomes (179-187). They found 95 female same-sex parents and different sex parent households with children 6 to 17 years old who matched parental and child characteristics. The results show there are “no significant interactions

between household type and family relationships or household type and parenting stress were found for any child outcomes.” (Bos et al. 179-187). Furthermore, the earlier study also shows “adolescents with lesbian mothers had higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of conduct problems than their counterparts in heterosexual-parent families,” and the comprehensive result show that adolescents from two-mother lesbian families are comparable to the adolescents who are from intact mother–father families (Bos et al., 1-16). Those research results show there are no major differences between the children from same-sex parents and heterosexual parents.

A study suggests that influence of gay fathers on their sons' sexual orientation is not large. An advertisement in gay publications recruited 55 gay or bisexual fathers and 82 sons who aged at least 17 years old. More than 90% of sons whose sexual orientations could be rated were heterosexual (Bailey et al., 124-129). Besides, Anderssen indicated there were twenty-three empirical studies published between 1978 and 2000 that show that the children who are raised by same-sex parents emotional functioning, sexual preference, stigmatization, gender role behavior, behavioral adjustment, gender identity, and cognitive functioning are typical. Children raised by same-sex parents do not systematically differ from other children who raised by different-sex parents on any of the outcomes. Moreover, the studies show that children raised by same-sex parents do not experience adverse outcomes compared with other children.

Those studies show us there are no impact by same-sex parents to their children, yet, Chairman of the Family Research Institute, Paul D. Cameron, PhD claimed that parents' sexual inclinations influence their children's. The research of 77 adolescents of homosexual parents who volunteered for the investigations, 30% were currently homosexual. 17 of 39 daughters and 6 of 32 sons of same-sex parents; 32% were currently heterosexual. Children of the ten transsexual parents, one of nine daughters were currently lesbian, one was currently heterosexual, and one was

transsexual, and the son's sexual preference was not reported (413). However, based on the statistical data, it actually shows more children who are raised by same-sex or transgender parents identify as heterosexual than homosexual.

The word homosexual is used to describe same-sex relationships in the recent world. “An estimated 3.5% of adults in the United States identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and an estimated 0.3% of adults are transgender.” (Gary, 1). Majority of LGBTQ community members have different-sex parents; their parents did not influence their sexual orientation, however, there are people that question that same-sex parents would turn their children to the same sexual orientation as them. “There is no scientific basis for concluding that lesbian mothers or gay fathers are unfit parents on the basis of their sexual orientation.” (Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children). If heterosexual married couples have the right of adopting children, why is it that homosexual parents do not have the same right? In conclusion, children who are raised by same-sex parents or gay parents not only do not differ from the children who are raised by heterosexual parents, but it is also good for their mental development and education. There are not enough negative reasons against the right of gay couples and their right to have children. As stated in the Fourteenth Amendment, everyone is equal, this is the most important reason as to why gay couples should definitely have the right to have or adopt children.

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