

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 381**  
**Resolution in Support of The Uniting American Families Act**

**WHEREAS**, A driving goal under U.S. immigration law is family unification and the ability of families and individuals to reside legally in the U.S., engaging fully in our country's rich civil traditions and form of government; and,

**WHEREAS**, The City of St. Louis celebrates and respects all immigrant groups and all families, including those of same-sex gay and lesbian partners; and,

**WHEREAS**, Current U.S. immigration law discriminates against a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident and his or her foreign-born partner by not allowing the sponsorship of the foreign partner for immigration benefits, although an opposite-sex couple would have the right to do so; and,

**WHEREAS**, This form of discrimination and unfair treatment under the law has devastating and life-altering consequences for same-sex partners; and,

**WHEREAS**, The inability to sponsor a same-sex partner leaves the couple with the following limited options: 1. Choose to remain in a costly long-distance international relationship; 2. Choose to live abroad in the foreign partner's country, if allowable; 3. Seek a visa, independent of the partnership, for the foreign-born partner, creating a limited duration of legal stay; 4. Choose to allow the foreign-born partner to remain undocumented or allow a visa to lapse, creating daily uncertainty and fear of deportation; or, 5. Terminate the relationship; and,

**WHEREAS**, The limited legal options for same-sex partners to keep their relationship unified exacts an enormous emotional, financial, and mental toll, disproportionate to opposite-sex couples in bi-national relationships; and,

**WHEREAS**, Beyond the personal challenges to same-sex couples, the City of St. Louis and the entire country risk a great loss of talent should the foreign partner and/or the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident be forced to depart the U.S. to keep the relationship whole in another country; and,

**WHEREAS**, Currently pending in the United States Congress is the Uniting American Families Act (H.R. 1024/5.424), reintroduced on February 12, 2009, by Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT). The purpose of this bill is "to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate discrimination in the immigration laws by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and lawful permanent residents and to penalize immigration fraud in connection with permanent partnerships"; and,

**WHEREAS**, The Uniting American Families Act would allow same-sex relationships to be treated no differently from opposite sex relationships and all legal requirements of qualifying under the statute and proving the good faith nature of their relationship would remain; and,

**WHEREAS**, The Uniting American Families Act would bring U.S. immigration law in line with the 19 other countries that already recognize same sex partnerships for immigration purposes: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, the

Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; and,

**WHEREAS**, The City of St. Louis fully supports the measures of Congress to allow gay and lesbian partners to access immigration benefits in an equal and fair manner, equivalent to opposite sex partners who currently enjoy such legal rights;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the members of the City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen, do hereby express our strong support for the passage of the Uniting American Families Act, or other laws that will end discrimination for bi-national same-sex partners under the immigration laws and will allow gay and lesbian residents of the City of St. Louis fair and equal access to immigration benefits through their permanent partnerships.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** That suitable copies of this resolution be prepared and sent to the St. Louis Congressional Delegation; Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives; Honorable Claire McCaskill, United States Senator; Honorable Christopher Bond, United States Senator and Honorable Joseph Biden, Vice-President of the United States and President of the United States Senate.

Introduced on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2010 by:

**Honorable Shane Cohn, Alderman 25<sup>th</sup> Ward**

Adopted this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2010 as attested by:

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David W. Sweeney  
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

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Lewis E. Reed  
President, Board of Aldermen