

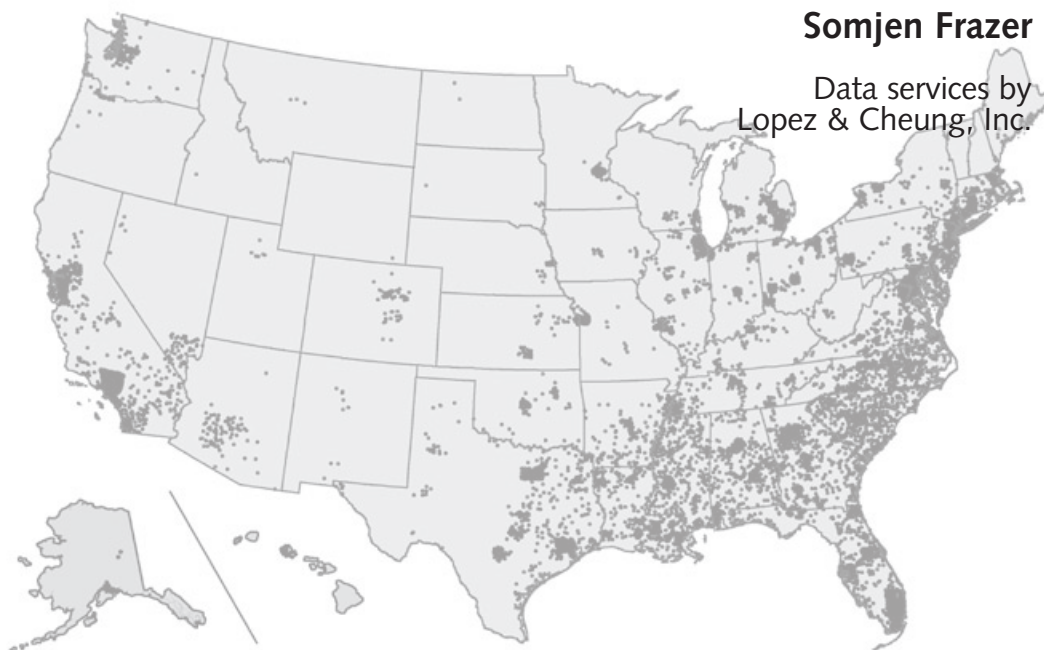


Black Same-Sex Households in the United States

A REPORT FROM THE 2000 CENSUS

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The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute** is a think tank dedicated to research, policy analysis and strategy development to advance greater understanding and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.



The **National Black Justice Coalition** is an ad hoc coalition of African-American gay and lesbian leaders committed to the development of policies and programs that seek to end discrimination in our communities.

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Foreword

BY H. ALEXANDER ROBINSON

Strategic Director, National Black Justice Coalition

The African-American family is the foundation of Black pride, a fundamental driver of Black advancement, and the source of many of the challenges faced by today's African-American communities. Traditionally, discussions about African-American families exclude any consideration of African-American lesbian and gay families. In fact, African-American educators, scholars, activists and leaders often approach Black gay people as "them" not "us." Continued failure to recognize our families leaves African-Americans thinking that gay people are wealthy and White, not our own brothers and sisters.

As this landmark report from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and the National Black Justice Coalition makes clear, gay African-Americans are an active, involved, vibrant and integral part of our communities. African-Americans make up 13% of the United States population. Black same-sex households are 14% of all same-sex households in the U.S. We are you.

Black same-sex couples in the U.S. are not so different from other Black couples. In a key sign of family stability, Black same-sex couples are nearly as likely as Black heterosexual couples to report living in the same residence as five years ago. Black same-sex couples don't just live in New York or Atlanta; this report shows that they live in rural and urban areas all over the country. Partnered Black men and women in same-sex households in the U.S. report post-secondary education at a rate nearly equal to Black married men and women.

This report makes clear that the tradition of the tight, strong, African-American family is alive and well in Black same-sex households. We are no less a part of the African-American community because we are also a part of the gay community. Black male same-sex couples in the U.S. are almost twice as likely to be raising biological children as White male same-sex couples in the U.S. Black female same-sex couples in the U.S. are just as likely to be raising adopted or foster children as Black married opposite-sex couples in the U.S.

African-Americans make up 13% of the United States population. Black same-sex households are 14% of all same-sex households in the U.S. We are you.

This report also notes how thoroughly gay African-Americans participate in our communities and serve our nation despite barriers to inclusion and laws that discriminate against them. Despite the military's unjust "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy, partnered Black women in same-sex households in the U.S. are more likely to serve their country in the military than married or cohabiting Black women in the U.S. Partnered Black men in same-sex households in the U.S. are more likely to have served in the armed forces than partnered White men in same-sex households in the U.S.

Clearly there is a need to include gay Americans in the country's laws that ensure equality. This argument is especially true for African-Americans. Black same-sex couples in the U.S. earn less money than Black married opposite-sex couples (we have to take what we can get—an employer can fire us simply because of our sexual orientation), and state law makes it more difficult for Black gay Americans to begin and raise families. And at a time when we should be valuing our soldiers and veterans, Black women are discharged under the military's anti-gay policies at far greater rates than they should be given their representation in the military. This costs them their jobs and their benefits. That's unfair. Discrimination is wrong, especially when it costs someone a chance to nobly serve their country.

This report about African-American same-sex couples in the U.S. is our first effort to outline the involvement of Black gay people in their communities. In the coming months the Task Force and NBJC will continue to examine, report on, and discuss the plight of Black gay people in America. We look forward to sharing our stories with our brothers and sisters and with America.



H. Alexander Robinson
Strategic Director
National Black Justice Coalition



Executive Summary

Anti-gay activists frequently claim that equal rights for gay and lesbian people are a threat to the civil rights of groups they deem “legitimate minorities,” including African Americans. For example, one flier distributed by a coalition of anti-gay organizations claimed that Martin Luther King Jr. “would be outraged if he knew that homosexualist extremists were abusing the civil rights movement to get special rights based on their behavior.”¹ Such rhetoric implies that there are no Black lesbian or gay people experiencing discrimination because of their sexual orientation. With 12 states considering anti-gay marriage constitutional amendments in 2004, such claims completely dismiss the existence of Black same-sex couples, many with children, who would benefit from the legal protections afforded by marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnership.

To better inform the debate on the impact of same-sex marriage in the United States, particularly on Black same-sex couples, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, in collaboration with the National Black Justice Coalition, conducted an analysis of data from the 2000 U.S. Census. This study sheds light on the basic demographics of Black same-sex couples nationwide, including residence patterns, parenting rates, educational attainment, employment status, income, housing, and veteran status. To better understand how proposed anti-gay marriage amendments would specifically affect Black same-sex couples, information about Black same-sex couples provided by the Census was also compared to information about White same-sex couples, as well as other Black fam-

“Same-Sex Unmarried Partners” and the 2000 U.S. Census

In 1990 and 2000 the U.S. Census allowed same-sex cohabiting couples to self-identify as “unmarried partners.” Those male-male and female-female couples who self-identified in this way are called “same-sex couples” or “same-sex households.” The Census does not ask about sexual orientation or gender identity. However, it is assumed that those indicating they are same-sex unmarried partners are in long-term, amorous relationships involving mutual support and caring. It is likely that many of the individuals in these same-sex couples would identify as “gay,” “lesbian,” “same gender loving,” or some other term for homosexual. Others would identify as bisexual, as would many men and women in opposite-sex coupled households.

1. Ross, K. (2002, August 2). Center appalled by MLK use in flier. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved August 30, 2004, from <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/2002/08/02/news/local/3782737.htm>

ily types, including Black married opposite-sex couples, Black cohabiting opposite-sex couples, and Black single parents.

According to the 2000 Census, there are almost 85,000 Black same-sex couples in the United States. Some 14% of all same-sex couples who self-identified on the US Census were Black same-sex couples. These couples and their families will be disproportionately harmed by proposed state and federal anti-gay marriage amendments. Despite the prejudice they may face due to racism and anti-gay bias, Black same-sex couples create and sustain stable families, many of them with children, and defy hurtful stereotypes of both Black people and gay *and* lesbian people.

Proposed anti-gay marriage state and federal constitutional amendments will disproportionately harm Black same-sex couples and their families because they are already economically disadvantaged compared to Black married opposite-sex couples, as well as compared to White same-sex couples.

- Black same-sex couples report lower annual median household income than Black married opposite-sex couples. Black female same-sex couples report a median income of \$9,000 less than Black married opposite-sex couples. Black male same-sex couples report a median income of \$2,000 less than Black married opposite-sex couples.²
- Black same-sex couples also report lower annual median household income than White same-sex couples.³ Black female same-sex couples report a median income of \$18,000 less than White female same-sex couples. Black male same-sex couples report a median income of \$20,000 less than White male same-sex couples.
- Black same-sex couples are less likely to report home ownership than Black married opposite-sex couples. Sixty-eight percent of Black married opposite-sex couples report home ownership, as do 54% of Black male same-sex couples, and 50% of Black female same-sex couples.
- Because Black same-sex couples earn less and are less likely to own a home, their inability to access the legal protections of marriage disproportionately hurts their earning power and ability to save money to provide for their children, buy a house, or prepare for retirement. If same-sex couples are fortunate enough to receive domestic partner health insurance through their employers, they must pay state and federal taxes on it as income. This is something married spouses do not have to do. Same-sex partners are not eligible for 1,138 federal protections and benefits available to married couples, including Social Security survivor benefits, Medicaid spend-down protections, and worker's compensation. Over a lifetime, ineligibility for these elements of the social safety net means that Black same-sex couples often pay more in taxes but receive less in public benefits. They are also ineligible for nonfinancial protections that affect job security, such as the right to take unpaid leave from work to care for one's partner under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Black same-sex couples report lower annual median household income than Black married opposite-sex couples.

2. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

3. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).



Black same-sex partners may be more likely than White same-sex partners to rely on public sector domestic partner health insurance, which is threatened by many anti-gay marriage amendments.

- Black men and women in same-sex households in the U.S. are about 25% more likely than White men and women in same-sex households to hold public sector jobs (16% of Black same-sex partners hold public sector jobs, vs. 13% of White same-sex partners). Many municipalities and state governments now offer domestic partner health insurance to employees in same-sex relationships (along with spousal health insurance to married employees). Because most of the anti-marriage amendments currently under consideration in the U.S. go beyond banning same-sex marriage and either ban or threaten domestic partner health insurance, such initiatives are a disproportionate threat to Black men and women in same-sex households.

Black female same-sex households are raising children at nearly twice the rate reported by White female same-sex couples, 61% versus 38% respectively.

Anti-gay family policies disproportionately harm Black same-sex couple families in the U.S. because they are more likely to be raising children than White same-sex couple families.

- Black female same-sex households are raising children at nearly twice the rate reported by White female same-sex couples, 61% versus 38% respectively.⁴
- Black male same-sex households in the U.S. are raising children at almost twice the rate reported by White male same-sex households, 46% versus 24% respectively.⁵

The families Black same-sex couples create are in many respects similar to other Black families.

- Black female same-sex couples are raising nonbiological (fostered or adopted) children at the same rate as Black married opposite-sex couples (14%), while Black male same-sex couples are raising nonbiological children at a slightly lower rate than Black married opposite-sex households (10% vs. 13%).
- Black women in same-sex households parent at almost the same rate as Black married opposite-sex couples (61% vs. 69%), while Black men in same-sex relationships parent at about two-thirds the rate of married opposite-sex couples (46% vs. 69%).
- Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couples (47% vs. 58%), and more likely than Black opposite-sex cohabiting couples (47% vs. 19%), to report living in the same residence as five years earlier. In other words, Black same-sex couples' residential pat-

Black women in same-sex households parent at almost the same rate as Black married opposite-sex couples (61% vs. 69%).

4. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

5. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

6. The Family Research Council (FRC) claims that “[a]mong homosexual men in particular, casual sex, rather than committed relationships, is the rule and not the exception.” To back up this claim, FRC cites a single study of Dutch men published in a journal focused on AIDS. FRC then warns that allowing gay male couples to marry will deal “a serious blow” to “the idea of marriage as a sexually exclusive and faithful relationship.” Xiridou, M. et al. (2003). The contribution of steady and casual partnerships to the incidence of HIV infection among homosexual men in Amsterdam. *AIDS*. 17:1029-1038. Cited in Sprigg, P. (2003). Question and answer: What’s wrong with letting same-sex couples “marry”? *Family Research Council In Focus*. Issue No. 256. Some gay men are promiscuous, as are some heterosexual men and some women of all sexual orientations. Many gay, bisexual and straight people are monogamous. While marriage encourages commitment and faithfulness, the state does not get involved in these matters except in divorce proceedings. Many men and women who are married cheat on their spouses. Sometimes this leads to divorce. But these people are given the chance to make a marriage work. FRC’s focus on alleged homosexual promiscuity ignores the many straight people in marriages who are promiscuous or unfaithful.

terns indicate that their relationships are long-term and stable, rather than short-term and unstable—a claim frequently made by anti-gay groups.⁶

Black men and women in same-sex households report serving in the military at high rates, despite the risk of losing their income and benefits because of the ban on lesbian and gay people serving openly.

- Partnered Black women in same-sex households report veteran status at nearly four times the rate of Black women married to a male partner (11% vs. 3%).
- Black men in same-sex households report veteran status at about three-fifths the rate of Black married men (18% vs. 31%).⁷
- Black women are discharged from the military under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” at rates far exceeding their representation among servicemembers: although they make up less than one percent of the military, they represent three percent of all those discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Despite documented, widespread harassment and violence against lesbian and gay people in the military, Black lesbian, gay, and bisexual people continue to serve their country at high rates.

CONCLUSION

Anti-gay leaders and organizations have long sought to divide the Black and gay communities. They not only speak as if there are no Black lesbian and gay people experiencing discriminatory treatment under key family policies, but also portray sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws as a threat to people of color.⁸ However, data from the 2000 Census clearly identify a large population of Black same-sex couples in the U.S., more than half of whom are raising children. These Black same-sex partners would benefit from nondiscrimination policies as well as the protections offered by family recognition.

In fact, anti-gay policies, including the proposed state and federal anti-gay marriage amendments, will disproportionately harm Black same-sex couples and their families because they further penalize those who are already disadvantaged in terms of income and home ownership. Because Black people in same-sex relationships are more likely to be raising children and working in the public sector than White gay people, they have more at stake when anti-gay family amendments are on the ballot. Removing discriminatory legislation and allowing Black same-sex couples to access benefits available to married people will hurt no one, and will allow more Americans to better support and protect their families.

Proposed state and federal anti-gay marriage amendments will disproportionately harm Black same-sex couples and their families because they further penalize those who are already disadvantaged due to both racism and anti-gay bias.

7. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

8. For example, see LaRue, J. (2003, March 22). Homosexuals hijack civil rights bus. Washington, DC: Concerned Women for America. Retrieved September 8, 2004, from <http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=5395&department=legal&categoryid=family>



Introduction

...The government's exclusion of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters from civil marriage officially degrades them and their families. It denies them the basic human right to marry the person they love. It denies them numerous legal protections for their families.

This discrimination is wrong. We cannot keep turning our backs on gay and lesbian Americans. I have fought too hard and too long against discrimination based on race and color not to stand up against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

I've heard the reasons for opposing civil marriage for same-sex couples. Cut through the distractions, and they stink of the same fear, hatred, and intolerance I have known in racism and in bigotry. . . .

We are all the American family. Let us recognize that the gay people living in our house share the same hopes, troubles, and dreams. It's time we treated them as equals, as family.⁹

—Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)
Civil Rights Leader

Anti-gay organizations, including those supporting dozens of proposed state and federal anti-gay marriage amendments, have long sought to divide the Black and gay communities, to portray them as mutually exclusive, and to portray gay people as a threat to people of color. They have even claimed that sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws threaten civil rights laws protecting people of color against racial discrimination. For example, the Traditional Values Coalition's 1992 video *Gay Rights, Special Rights* portrayed civil rights struggles as a zero sum game between Black people (presumed to be straight) and gay people (presumed to be White). If gay people get civil rights, the video argued, this will mean fewer rights for African Americans.

One flier, distributed in 2002 by a coalition of anti-gay organizations, even claimed that Martin Luther King Jr. "would be outraged if he knew that homosexualist extremists were abusing the civil rights movement to get special rights based on their behavior."¹⁰

9. Lewis, J. (2003, October 25). At a crossroads on gay unions. *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved December 11, 2003, from http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2003/10/25/at_a_crossroads_on_gay_unions

10. Ross, K. (2002, August 2). Center appalled by MLK use in flier. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved August 30, 2004, from <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/2002/08/02/news/local/3782737.htm>

These claims are patently false and misleading, and they imply that there are no Black lesbian, gay, or bisexual people experiencing discrimination because of their sexual orientation, let alone Black same-sex couple families with children who would benefit from the legal protections afforded by marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnership.

Civil rights are not a limited pie, nor are they something that only Black people have. Because of racism and the failure of many White people to abide by the Constitution's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws," the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 were required to make this equality explicit for Black Americans. Because of discrimination and bias against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, an increasing number of state and local governments have passed laws banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Equal rights for LGBT people threaten no one. In fact, they protect many LGBT people of color against discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. A survey of 2,645 Black LGBT people across the U.S. in 2000 found that 53% had experienced racial discrimination, and 42% had experienced sexual orientation discrimination.¹¹

As Julian Bond of the NAACP recently wrote:

Particularly troublesome is the argument that there are no parallels between discrimination against gays and lesbians and against blacks, and that the former are seeking "special rights."

Of course there are important differences in our history and experiences. Only African-Americans were enslaved. Only African-Americans still suffer from slavery's legacy.

But discrimination is wrong no matter who the victim is. There are no "special rights" in America; we are all entitled to life, liberty, and happiness' pursuit. There is no race-based admission test requirement for civil rights. Our rights are not color-coded; they are available to all.¹²

To better inform the debate on the impact of same-sex marriage in the U.S., particularly on Black same-sex couples, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, in collaboration with the National Black Justice Coalition, conducted an analysis of data from the 2000 U.S. Census. The research firm of Lopez & Cheung, Inc. provided the data for the analysis. This study sheds light on the basic demographics of Black same-sex couples in the U.S., including residence patterns, parenting rates, educational attainment, employment status, income, housing, and veteran status. To better understand how the proposed anti-gay marriage amendment would specifically impact Black same-sex couples, information about Black same-sex couples provided by the Census was also compared to information about White same-sex couples, as well as other Black family types: Black married opposite-sex couples, Black cohabiting opposite-sex couples, and Black single parents.

Despite some limitations (see Technical Appendix), the 2000 Census amassed the larg-

According to the 2000 Census, there are nearly 600,000 same-sex couples in the United States. Almost 85,000 of these couples include at least one Black person.

11. Battle, J., Cohen, C., Warren, D., Ferguson, G., and Audam, S. (2002). *Say it loud: I'm Black and I'm proud; Black pride survey 2000*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. p. 42. Available at www.TheTaskForce.org

12. Bond, J. (2004, March 8). Letter to the Honorable Robert Travaglini [Massachusetts Senate President]. Baltimore: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.



est data set available on same-sex headed households, including Black same-sex couple families. Almost 85,000 Black same-sex couples self-identified on the 2000 Census as “unmarried partners” of the same sex, representing 14% of all same-sex couples reporting. This closely reflects the fact that Black people represent 13% of the total U.S. population. Although they represent an important constituency in their home states and across the nation, little research has been conducted on the experiences of Black same-sex couples.¹³

Documenting the experiences of Black same-sex couples in the U.S. is vital to informing the debate over same-sex marriage, particularly now that anti-gay groups are promoting state and federal constitutional amendments to ban same-sex couples from marrying. Most of these amendments may also invalidate existing civil union and domestic partnership policies, and rescind benefits currently available to many public sector employees in same-sex relationships. This could have a disproportionate effect on partnered Black men and women in same-sex households, who are more likely than partnered White men and women in same-sex households to work in the public sector. In fact, 16% of partnered Black men and women in same-sex households, versus 13% of partnered White men and women in same-sex households, work in the public sector.

Although the Federal Marriage Amendment was defeated in the U.S. Senate in 2004, anti-gay leaders and organizations have vowed to continue to fight for its passage in the future. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Marriage Protection Act (H.R. 3313) on July 22, 2004, by a margin of 233-194. If passed in the Senate, this law would strip all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of jurisdiction over challenges to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defined and restricted the federal benefits of marriage to opposite-sex couples. A clear violation of the Equal Protection clause¹⁴ and the once bedrock principle of separation of powers, H.R. 3313 sets a chilling precedent, threatening the principle of judicial review that has enabled federal courts to determine the constitutionality of laws for over 200 years.

If passed, how will federal and state anti-gay marriage amendments specifically affect Black same-sex couple families? To answer this question, we first briefly review social science research on the experiences of Black Americans, gay or straight. We then summarize the results of our analysis of 2000 Census data, with a particular focus on how these data shed light on the potential impact of the proposed anti-gay marriage amendment, as well as other anti-gay family policies, on Black same-sex couples and their families.

Almost 85,000 Black same-sex couples self-identified on the 2000 Census as “unmarried partners” of the same sex, representing 14% of all same-sex couples reporting on the 2000 Census.

13. For an overview of research on Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the U.S., see Battle, J. and Bennett, M. (2000). Research on lesbian and gay populations within the African American community: What have we learned? *African American Research Perspectives*. 6(2):35-47. See also Battle, J., Cohen, C., Warren, D., Ferguson, G., and Audam, S. (2002). *Say it loud: I'm Black and I'm proud; Black pride survey 2000*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. Available at www.TheTaskForce.org

14. Murphy, L. & Anders, C. (2004, July 13). Letter to U.S. Representatives re: Marriage Protection Act, H.R. 3313. Washington, DC: American Civil Liberties Union.

Black Same-Sex Households in Context

According to the recent *State of Black America (2004)* report by the National Urban League, Black Americans, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, are significantly disadvantaged in terms of education, wealth and income, health, and other measures. For example, less than half of Black Americans own the home in which they live compared to 70% of White Americans. Black men and women earn less, on average, than White men and women. Black men earn 70% of the income of White men, and Black women earn 83% of the income of White women.¹⁵

The 2000 Census documents racial inequities in educational attainment at the national level: 84% of White people over age 25 have a high school degree, compared to only 72% of Black people. This disparity increases as the level of education increases, with White people having advanced degrees at nearly double the rates of Black people.¹⁶ The American Council on Education also found that Black men lag behind Black women in enrollment in colleges and universities.¹⁷ In fact, according to the Justice Policy Institute, there are more African American men in prison than in college, the result of pervasive poverty in Black communities and discriminatory law enforcement that includes differential sentencing based on the race of the defendant in criminal cases.¹⁸

Black LGBT Americans face additional hardship because of discrimination based on their sexual orientation. A survey of nearly 2,700 Black LGBT people conducted at Black Pride events in 2000 found that Black LGBT people faced high rates of discrimination based on racial and ethnic identity (53%) and sexual orientation (42%).¹⁹ They experienced racism at mostly White gay events and venues; and experienced homophobia in Black heterosexual organizations, from their families of origin, from straight friends, and also in churches and religious organizations.

15. National Urban League. (2004). *The state of Black America*. National Urban League: New York. Retrieved August 4, 2004, from www.nul.org

16. Bauman, K & Graf, N. (2003). *Educational attainment: 2000*. Washington, DC: US Census.

17. Harvey, W. (2003). *Minorities in higher education status report*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

18. *Cellblocks or classrooms?* (2002). Justice Policy Institute. Washington, DC: Author.

19. Battle, J., Cohen, C., Warren, D., Ferguson, G., and Audam, S. (2002). *Say it loud: I'm Black and I'm proud; Black pride survey 2000*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute.



Despite these experiences of homophobia in their religious communities, 85% of Black LGBT people surveyed indicated that they were affiliated with a religion. About half said their church or religious institution influenced their daily lives, even though more than half said their religion condemned homosexuality. Although the Census does not provide data on religious membership, adherence or religious service attendance, the Black Pride data give us some indication that religion is very important to Black LGBT people. *When Black religious leaders speak out against same-sex marriage and gay people, whether they realize it or not, they are talking about members of their own congregations.*

Census Data on Same-Sex Households

The U.S. Census gathers data on same-sex couples through a series of questions that allow householders to identify who else lives in the house and their relationship to the householder. Householders may select “unmarried partner” to describe another same-sex adult in the same household if they choose to, and thus they are included in a dataset on same-sex headed households. The Census does not ask respondents to report their sexual orientation or their gender identity. Though the Census does not ask about sexual orientation, it is assumed that these same-sex unmarried partners are in amorous relationships of mutual caring and support. Most likely identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or some other term for homosexual. Bisexuals and transgender people are found in both opposite-sex and same-sex couple households.²⁰

While the Census does allow same-sex cohabiting couples to self-identify, it does not allow single people, individuals in same-sex relationships who are not living together, youth living with their parents, seniors living with their children and/or grandchildren who do not have a partner or do not live with their partner, many homeless people, many undocumented immigrants, and, of course, those not comfortable “outing” themselves to a government agency to self-identify as being in a same-sex relationship. Due to these significant limitations, the Census does not reflect the actual number or the full diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the United States.

The data used in this report are derived from a custom tabulation of the five percent Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS—see Technical Appendix).

The 2000 Census counts nearly 600,000 same-sex headed households. This represents a significant undercount.

20. Transgender people are those whose identity or behavior falls outside stereotypical gender expectations. Transsexuals, cross-dressers, and other gender non-conforming people are included in this “umbrella” category. For more on definitions of transgender people, see Mottet, L. & Ohle, J. (2004). *Transitioning our shelters: A guide to making homeless shelters safe for transgender people*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and National Coalition for the Homeless. pp. 7-10.



DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2000 Census, there are nearly 600,000 same-sex couples who self-identified in the U.S.²¹ Fourteen percent of these, or almost 85,000 couples—are Black. In other words, at least one of the partners in these couples reported his or her race as Black or African American. Most of these couples are comprised of two Black men or two Black women (and all were comprised of two men or two women). Of the Black same-sex households in this study, 21% are interracial couples. Only 10% of the White same-sex households are interracial.

Immigration Status and Language

Members of Black same-sex households are more likely to have been born outside of the U.S. than members of White same-sex households. Eleven percent of Black same-sex couple households report that at least one partner immigrated from another country, compared with only six percent of White same-sex couple households. Black married opposite-sex couples are more likely than Black same-sex couples to have at least one partner who was born outside of the U.S. (13% vs. 11%). Nine percent of partnered Black men and women in same-sex households and 19% of partnered men and women in interracial same-sex households report that they speak Spanish at home. Ninety-four percent of people in Black same-sex households are citizens.

The fact that more than one in ten Black same-sex households report a partner born outside the U.S. implicates U.S. immigration policy as a particular concern for Black lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Opposite-sex couples, in which one partner is foreign-born, can marry and are allowed to stay together under U.S. immigration policy. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans, however, are not allowed to sponsor their same-sex partners for immigration purposes. Often, same-sex couples must move to Canada or elsewhere to stay together.²²

Disability

Seventeen percent of partnered Black men in same-sex households in the US report having a disability, as do 16% of partnered Black women in same-sex households. Eighteen percent of Black married men and 15% of married Black women report a disability. While Black married spouses can take unpaid leave from work to care for their spouse under the Family and Medical Leave Act, Black same-sex partners are not eligible.

Age

Because the different kinds of couples (married, same-sex and opposite-sex cohabiting) are of different ages on average, some of the findings in the following analyses may actually be the result of the life-stage differ-

Eleven percent of Black same-sex couples report that at least one partner immigrated from another country. Nine percent of Black same-sex couples speak Spanish at home.

Definitions

Married couple:
opposite-sex, legally recognized relationship

Cohabiting couple:
opposite-sex, non-married couple

Black couple:
couple in which at least one partner is Black (including interracial couples)

White couple:
couple in which "person number one" reported his or her race as White and the partner did not report his or her race as Black

Interracial couple:
couple in which one member is Black and one is of another ethnicity

Same-sex couple:
two people of the same sex living together who identify as "unmarried partners" on their Census form

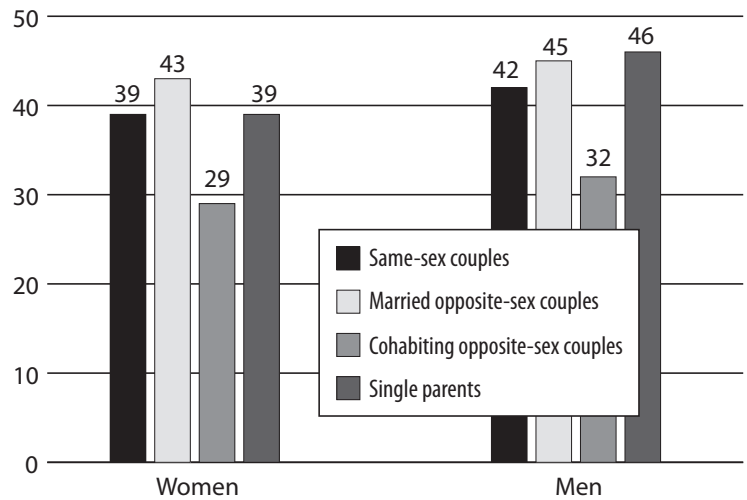
21. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

22. For more on this issue, see Cahill, S., Ellen, M., & Tobias, S. (2002). *Family policy: Issues affecting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. p. 54-57.

ences people experience as they age. For example, income often increases with age until late in life, as does the likelihood of home ownership. Figure 1 illustrates the differences in median age of the various types of couples we considered in this analysis. On average, married opposite-sex couples are older than same-sex couples, who are in turn older than cohabiting opposite-sex couples (couples “living together” who are not married).

However, many partnered Black women and men in same-sex couples are older. Ten percent of partnered Black women and men in same-sex couples are age 65 or older, and another nine percent are between ages 55 and 64. Among partnered Black women in same-sex couples, nine percent are 65 and older, and eight percent are between ages 55 to 64. Among partnered Black men in same-sex couples, just under 12% are 65 or older, and 11% are between ages 55 to 64.

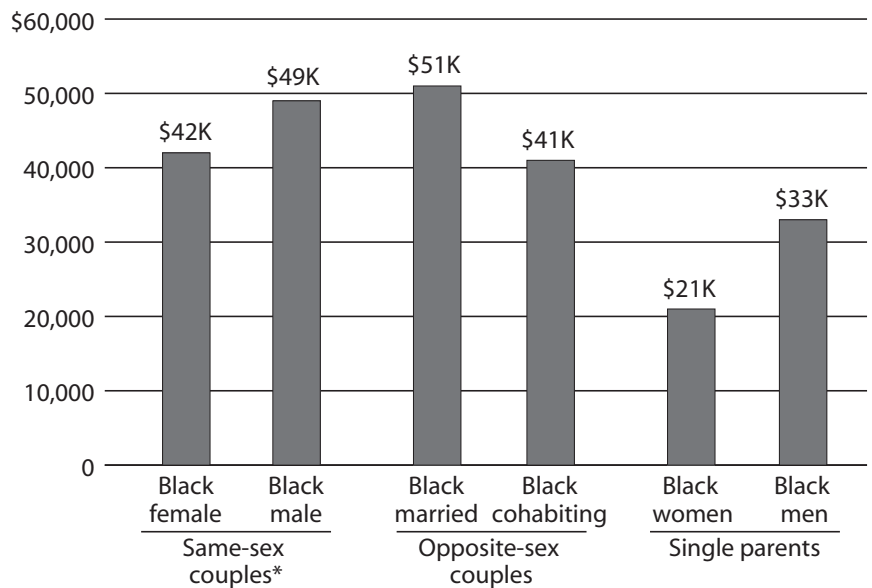
Figure 1: Median age of individuals in Black family types (in years)



INCOME²³

Anti-gay leaders often argue that gay and lesbian people do not need nondiscrimination laws because they are wealthier than heterosexuals.²⁴ Such claims are inaccurate because they are often based on surveys of subscribers to gay newsmagazines, such as *The Advocate*, and in general, people who subscribe to magazines earn more than average. However, an analysis of Census and General Social Survey data found that same-sex couples actually earned about the same or less than opposite-sex married couples.²⁵

Figure 2: Median annual household income of Black family types



* Includes households in which both partners are Black, as well as Black interracial couples (Black-other).

23. Income data is collected in exact figures before taxes on the long form of the Census.

24. Badgett, M. (2001). *Money, myths and change: The economic lives of lesbians and gay men*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Of course, relative wealth does not automatically protect one against bias. In fact, alleged differences in wealth are sometimes claimed precisely to mobilize resentment against a minority group.

25. *Ibid.*



This is particularly true for the Black same-sex households we analyzed in this study. As illustrated in Figure 2, Black same-sex couples earn slightly less than Black married opposite-sex couples. Black female same-sex households report a median income of \$9,000 less than Black married couples, while Black male same-sex households report a median income of \$2,000 less than Black married opposite-sex couple households.²⁶

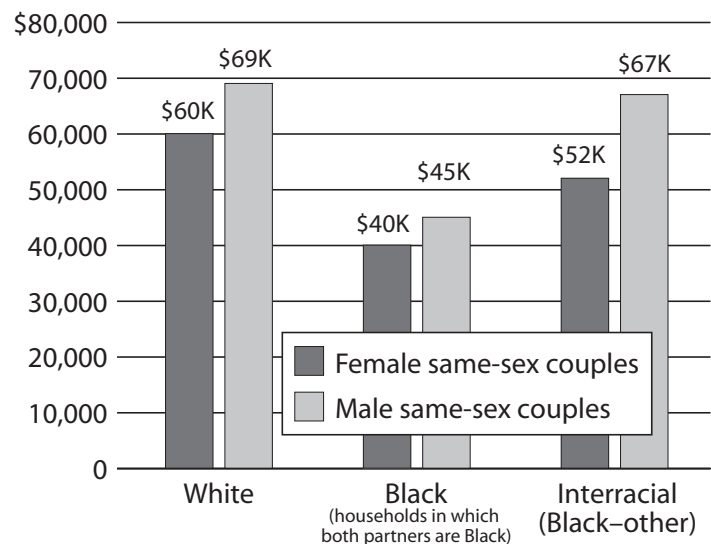
As illustrated in Figure 3, median household income differences are even more striking when same-sex couples of different races are compared.²⁷ White male same-sex couples report over \$24,000 more in annual household income than Black male same-sex couples in which both partners are Black (\$69,000 compared to \$45,000). However, interracial Black male same-sex couples make only \$2,000 less than White male same-sex couples. The patterns are similar for Black female same-sex couples, with White female same-sex couples reporting \$20,000 more than Black female same-sex couples in which both partners are black, and \$8,000 more than Black female interracial couples.

The differences in income between Black and White same-sex couples mirror broader socioeconomic patterns reported nationwide. Black Americans are twice as likely as White Americans to live in poverty. In fact, the nationwide gap between Black median household income and White median household income has grown since the 1950s, with African American families reporting only 62% of the median income of White families. When assets such as owning a home are considered, the disparity is even greater, with Black families reporting just 7.5% of the median assets of White families. In other words, the average White family owns about 13 times more in assets than the average Black family in the U.S.²⁸

2000 Census data on same-sex couples refute the stereotype that gay and lesbian people are wealthier and more privileged than heterosexuals.²⁹ The extent of same-sex couples' economic disadvantage is actually understated, because the Census collects pre-tax data on income. Since same-sex couples often pay more in state and federal taxes than their heterosexual peers because they cannot file jointly, the true income differences between same-sex couples

The extent of same-sex couples' economic disadvantage is actually understated, because the Census collects pre-tax data on income.

Figure 3: Median annual household income of same-sex couples



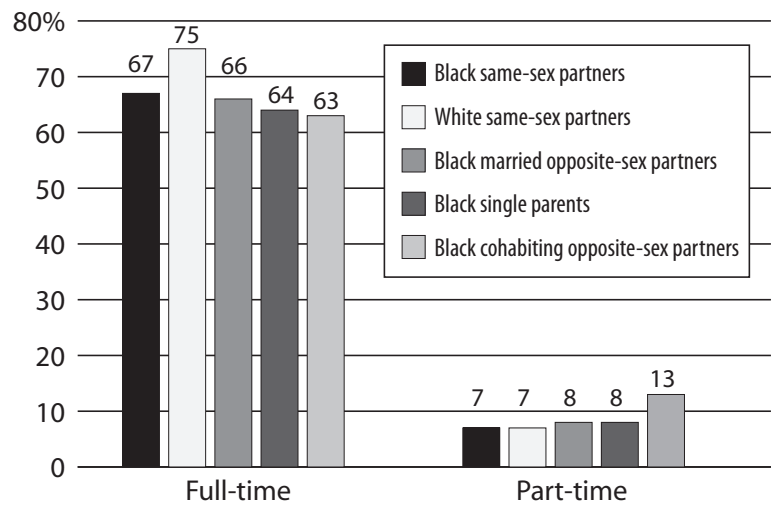
There are 1,138 federal benefits and protections available to married couples that same-sex couples cannot access.

26. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).
 27. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).
 28. Statistical abstract and net worth report. (2000). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau. Cited in *Social/economic indicators: Comparing Brown era racial disparities to today*. (2004). Columbus, OH: Kirwan Institute.
 29. "What's wrong with 'gay rights'? You be the judge!" (1992). Colorado For Family Values. Campaign leaflet in favor of Amendment Two, reprinted in: *Constructing homophobia: How the right wing defines lesbians, gay men and bisexuals as a threat to civilization*. (1993). Political Research Associates. Cambridge: Author. For an analysis of the myth of gay affluence, see Badgett., M. (2001). *Money, myths and change: The economic lives of lesbians and gay men*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

and opposite-sex married couples are not recorded by the Census.³⁰

For example, same-sex couples must report domestic partner health insurance as income and pay income taxes on it, while married opposite-sex couples are not taxed on spousal health insurance. Further, same-sex partners do not have access to their partner's pensions or Social Security benefits if he or she dies, and they must pay taxes on assets they inherit even if those assets involve a house in which both partners lived and owned jointly. There are 1,138 federal benefits and protections available to married couples that same-sex couples cannot access.³¹ States, municipalities, and private entities also offer many benefits contingent upon marital status.

Figure 4: Full-time and part-time employment

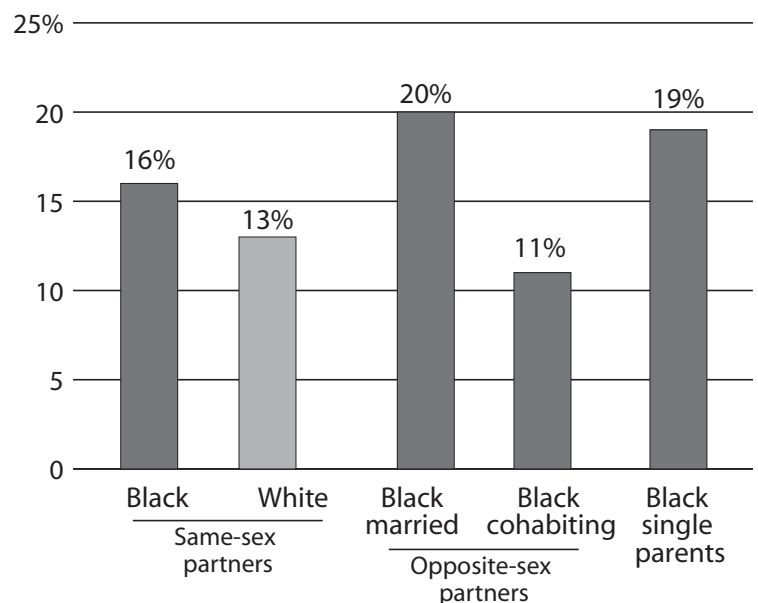


EMPLOYMENT

As illustrated in Figure 4, partnered White men and women in same-sex households are more likely to report that they are employed full-time than any other family type we analyzed in this study. There are no significant differences by gender among individuals in Black and White same-sex households working full-time. Among Black married opposite-sex individuals, 75% of Black men report working full-time, versus 64% of Black women.

As illustrated in Figure 5, partnered Black men and women in same-sex households (16%) report working in the public sector at rates comparable to Black married men and women (20%) and Black single parents (19%). Black men and women in

Figure 5: Public sector employment



30. Dougherty, T. (2004). *Economic benefits of marriage under federal and Oregon law*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. Available at www.TheTaskForce.org; Dougherty, T. (2004). *Economic benefits of marriage under federal and Massachusetts law*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. Available at www.TheTaskForce.org

31. General Accounting Office. (2004, January 23). Report to Senate Majority Leader William Frist. GAO-04-353R. This represents an increase since 1997, when the GAO issued its first report that listed 1,049 federal laws and benefits that only married couples can access.



same-sex households are also more likely to work in the public sector than White men and women in same-sex households.³²

These findings have important policy implications. First, domestic partner policies that cover municipal or state employees could provide health and other benefits to many Black same-sex partners. In 2004 Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico issued Executive Order No. 2003-010, mandating that domestic partners of state employees be given the same benefits as married spouses of state employees. In many jurisdictions domestic partner benefits can be extended through executive order.³³

Second, executive orders banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in public employment—such as those enacted in 2003 by Governor Edward Rendell of Pennsylvania and former Governor Paul Patton of Kentucky—could also cover a significant portion of this population.

As illustrated in Figure 6, partnered Black men and women in same-sex households report similar rates of not working as Black married men and women and Black single parents. The Census does not track unemployment rates like the Department of Labor. Individuals who report working zero hours in the previous year are categorized as not working. Twenty-seven percent of partnered Black men and women in same-sex households reported that they did not work in 1999, as did 28% of Black married men and women, and 28% of Black single parents. In contrast, 19% of partnered White men and women in same-sex households who reported not working in 1999.

Figure 6: Did not work in 1999

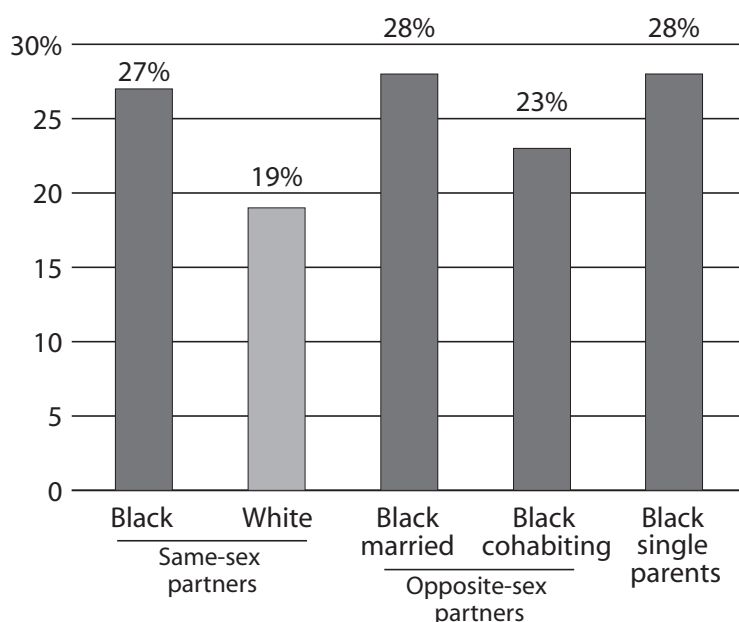
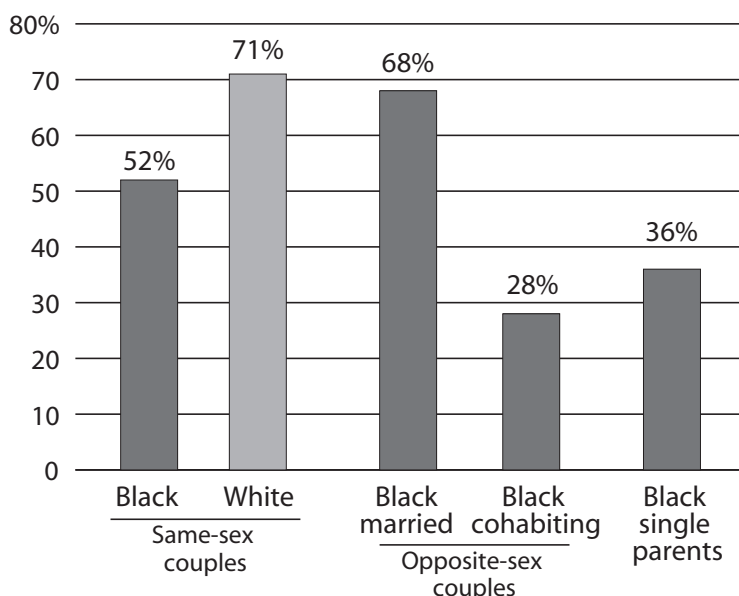


Figure 7: Home ownership



32. Fifteen percent of partnered Black men in same-sex households reported public sector employment compared to 11% of partnered White men in same-sex households. Seventeen percent of partnered Black women in same-sex households reported public sector employment compared to 15% of partnered White women in same-sex households. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

33. New Mexico Attorney General's Office. (2003). Opinion Request – Executive Order No. 2003-010 Extending Certain Benefits to State Employees' Domestic Partners. Retrieved August 27, 2004, from <http://www.ago.state.nm.us/divs/civil/opinions/a2003/ExtendingBenefitsToStateEmployeesDomesticPartners.htm>

HOME OWNERSHIP

The United States government measures wealth and poverty in terms of income. While there is a significant racial gap in income, the gap is even greater when assets are considered. Key among these assets is home ownership. Despite claims made by anti-gay organizations that same-sex relationships are unhealthy, unstable and short-term, Census data on home ownership and time spent at the same residence provide strong evidence of stability and commitment. However, many committed same-sex couples cannot afford to buy a home together.

As Figure 7 illustrates, Black same-sex couples are less likely to own their own homes than White same-sex couples or Black married opposite-sex couples. In fact, 52% of Black same-sex couples report home ownership, compared to 71% of White same-sex couples.³⁴

Figure 8 illustrates that White female same-sex couples are slightly more likely than White male same-sex couples to own their own homes, although the opposite is true for Black couples. Even when controlling for age, Black female same-sex couples are like Black married opposite-sex couples in that they are significantly more likely to report home ownership than Black cohabiting opposite-sex couples.³⁵

Figure 8: Home ownership rates of same-sex couples

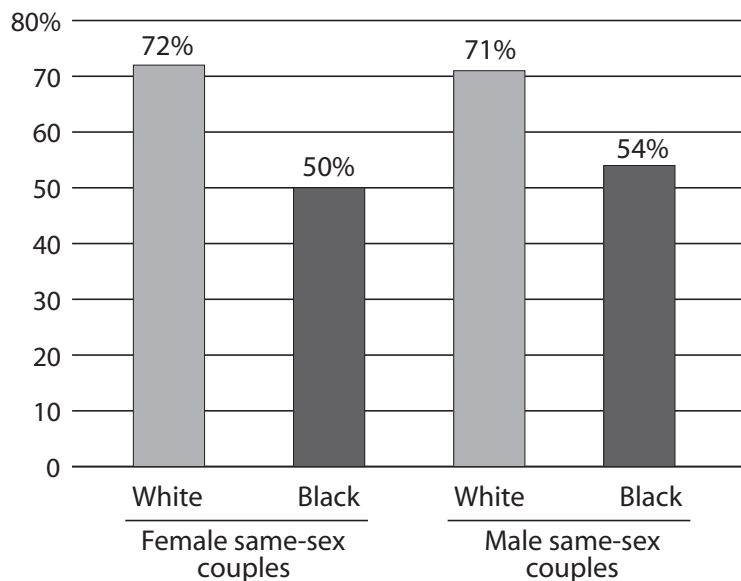
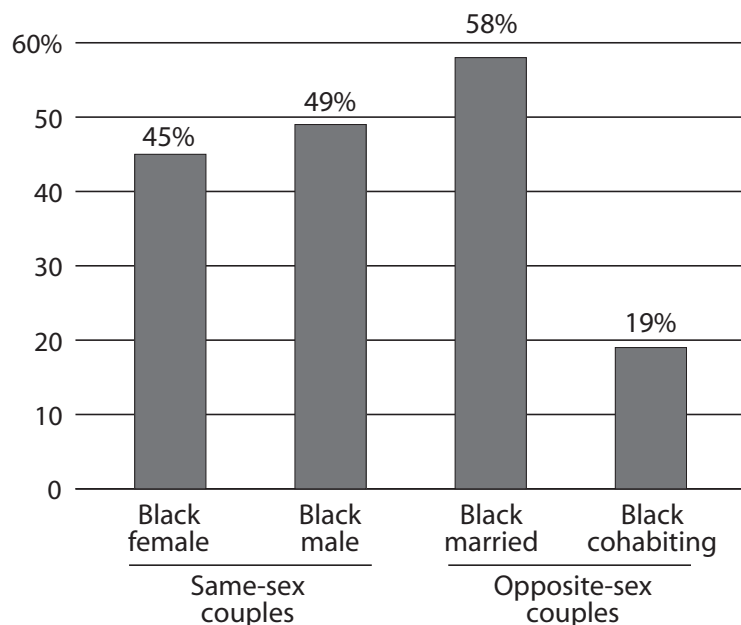


Figure 9: Black families reporting same residence five years ago



RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS

Overall, the residence patterns of Black same-sex couples are more like those of Black married opposite-sex couples than those of Black cohabiting opposite-sex couples. Forty-nine percent of Black male same-sex couples and 45%

34. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance, see Technical Appendix).

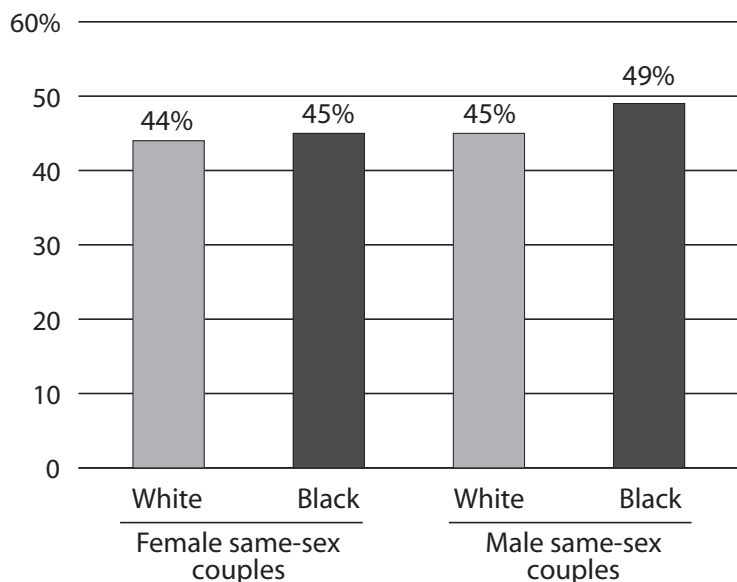
35. This was determined by running a logistic regression predicting homeownership from age and type of Black couple with cohabiting Black couples as the reference category. Dummy variables were created for Black same-sex and married couples. Black female same-sex and married couples' t-values were greater than 1.96, significant for a 2-tailed test at the .05 level. This means that that they were statistically more likely than cohabiting couples to have reported that they had owned their own home.



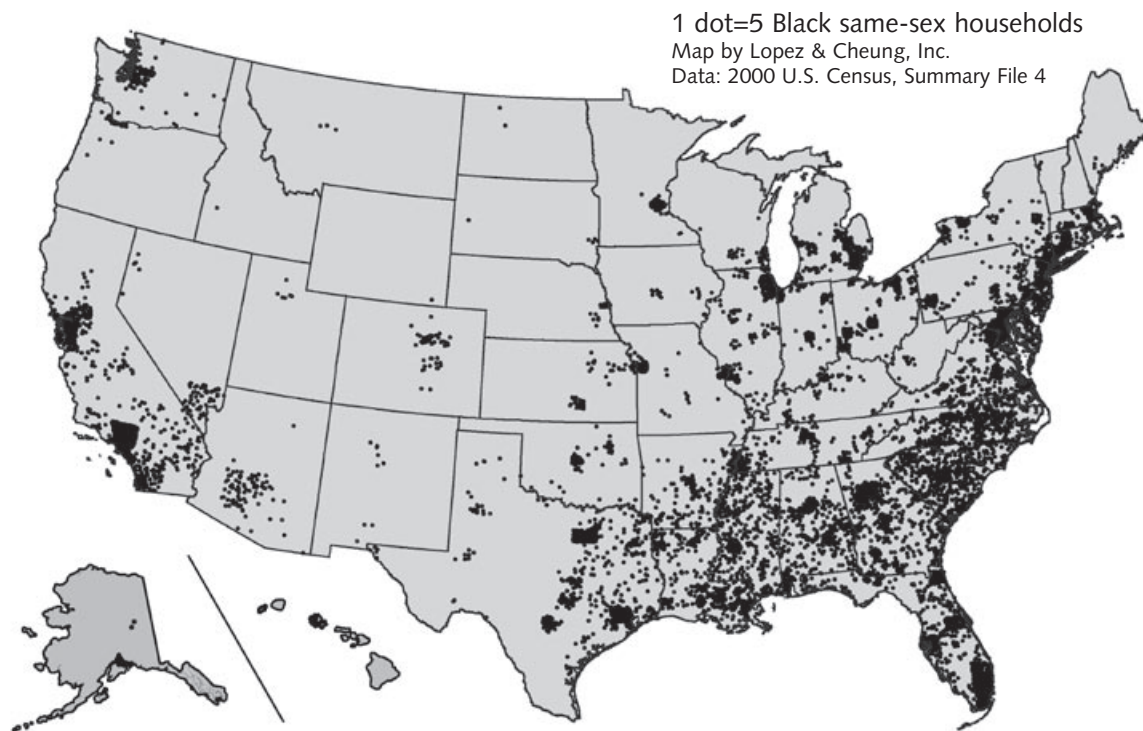
of Black female same-sex couples report living in the same residence five years ago, compared to 58% of Black married opposite-sex couples. In contrast, only 19% of Black cohabiting opposite-sex couples report living in the same residence five years ago (see Figure 9).

The fact that Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couples to have lived in the same home for the previous five years is a good indication that their relationships are stable and long-term. Even when controlling for age, Black same-sex couples and Black married opposite-sex couples are all significantly more likely than Black cohabiting opposite-sex couples to report living in the same residence five years ago.³⁶ Black same-sex couples are also more likely

Figure 10: Same-sex couples reporting same residence five years ago

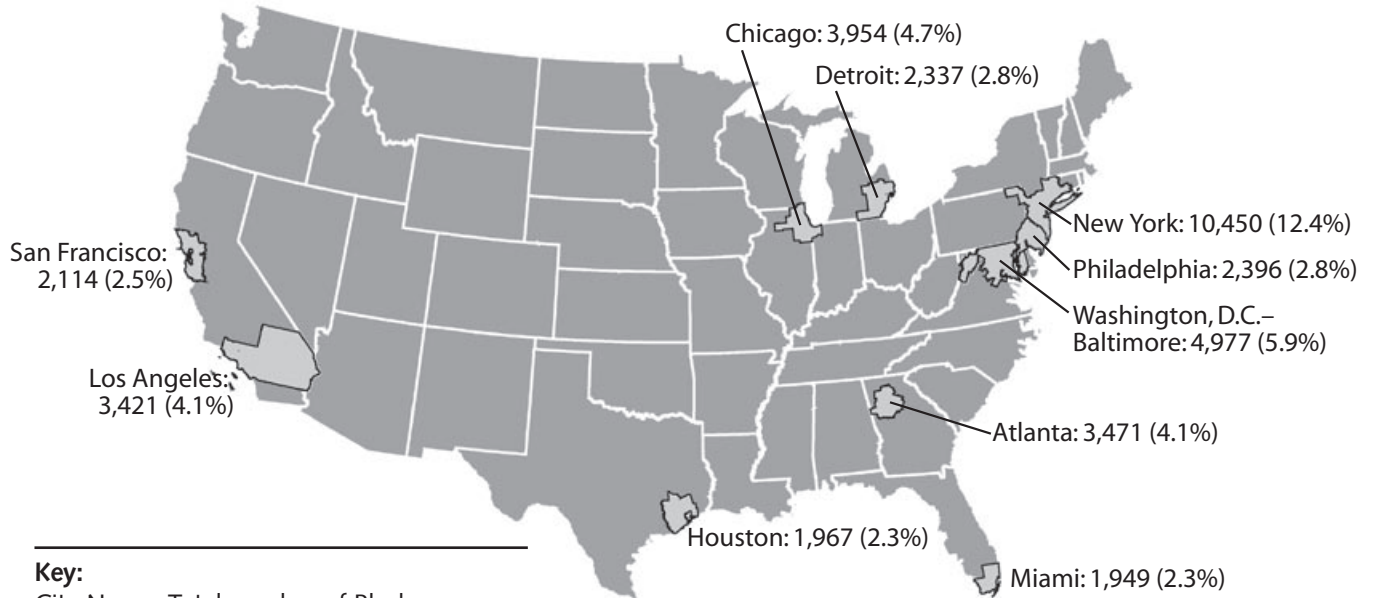


Black same-sex households in the United States



36. This was determined by running a logistic regression predicting residence from age and type of Black couple with cohabiting Black couples as the reference category. Dummy variables were created for Black same-sex and married couples. The same independent variables were used as for homeownership. Black same-sex and married couples' t-values were greater than 1.96, significant for a 2-tailed test at the .05 level. This means that that they were statistically more likely than cohabiting couples to have reported the same residence five years ago.

Top 10 metropolitan areas by number and share of Black same-sex households in the U.S.



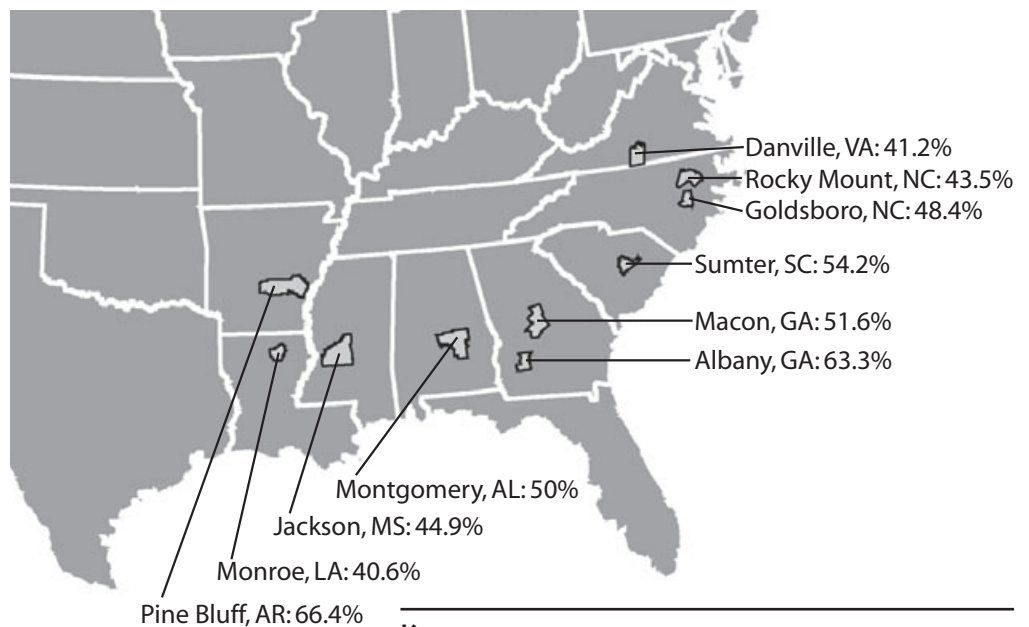
Key:

City Name: Total number of Black same-sex households (Percent of all Black same-sex households in that metropolitan area)

Map by Lopez & Cheung, Inc.

Data: 2000 U.S. Census, Summary File 4

Top 10 metropolitan areas by proportion of Black same-sex households over all same-sex households



Key:

City Name: Percent of Black same-sex households over all same-sex households in that metropolitan area

Map by Lopez & Cheung, Inc.

Data: 2000 U.S. Census, Summary File 4



than White same-sex couples to have lived in the same residence five years ago (see Figure 10). This may be connected to wealth, as people with greater assets and income are more able to move to new locations. As noted earlier, White same-sex couples report higher household incomes than Black same-sex couples.

The 2000 Census documents that many Black same-sex couples live in smaller, more rural cities and towns. The top ten metropolitan areas with the highest proportion of Black same-sex households *among all same-sex households* are in the South. They include Macon and Albany, Georgia; Sumter, South Carolina; Rocky Mount and Goldsboro, North Carolina; Montgomery, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; Pine Bluff, Arkansas; Danville, Virginia; and Monroe, Louisiana. This pattern mirrors that of the nation overall, where, according to the 2000 Census, 54% of the Black population lives in the South.³⁷ Black same-sex households are part of their respective communities, sending children to local schools and dealing with the same issues all Black households face.

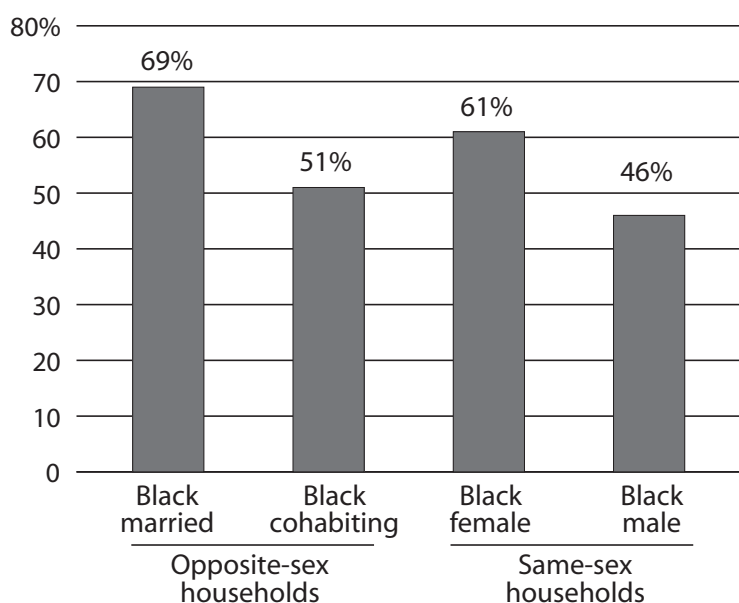
The fact that Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couples to have lived in the same home for the previous five years is a good indication that their relationships are stable and long-term.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

According to the 2000 Census, many Black same-sex couples are raising children, including biological and nonbiological children. The Census defines biological children as children who are the biological offspring of one of the adults in the same-sex unmarried partner household. The Census defines a nonbiological child as a) a blood relative of one of the same-sex partners, such as a niece, nephew, or grandchild, or b) a foster child or adopted child who is not a blood relation. Black female same-sex households are raising children at about the same rate as Black married opposite-sex households: 61% versus 69% respectively (see Figure 11).

As Figure 12 illustrates, Black same-sex households are nearly twice as likely as White same-sex households to be raising children. Black male same-sex households are raising children at nearly twice the rate reported by White male same-sex households, 46% versus 24% respectively. Sixty-one percent of Black female same-sex households are raising children, compared with 38% of White female same-sex households.³⁸

Figure 11: Children present in Black families



37. McKinnon, J. (2001). *The Black population: Census 2000 brief*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved August 25, 2004 from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-5.pdf>

38. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

Nationwide, 56% of Black female same-sex couples report raising a biological child of one of the partners in their household, while 41% of Black male same-sex couples report a biological child present. In contrast, only 34% of White female same-sex households and 22% of White male same-sex households report raising a biological child (see Figure 13). The higher rate of parenting among Black female same-sex couples than among White female same-sex couples confirms trends observed in the 1990 Census data, in which partnered Black women in same-sex households across the U.S. were nearly three times as likely to have given birth in their lifetimes as partnered White women in same-sex households.³⁹

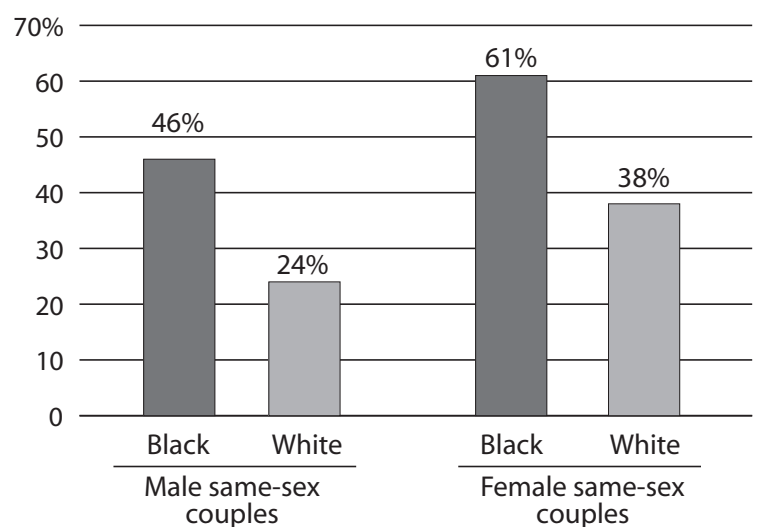
56% of Black female same-sex couples in the U.S. are raising biological children, compared to 65% of Black married opposite-sex couples.

Since many of the individuals in same-sex households have been married previously to a person of the opposite sex, many of the biological children reported in those households likely come from these previous marriages. Figure 14 illustrates that partnered Black men in same-sex households are much more likely to have been previously married than partnered White men in same-sex households (44% versus 40% respectively). White and Black women in same-sex headed households are equally likely to have been married previously (48%).

In addition to reporting high rates of biological children present in their households, Black same-sex households report raising nonbiological children at higher rates than White same-sex households. Nonbiological children include adopted children, foster children, and grandchildren, nephews and nieces (who are biologically related to the adult who is their grandparent, aunt or uncle but are not technically biological children of that individual). As shown in Figure 15, 14% of Black female same-sex households report raising at least one nonbiological child, compared to only six percent of White female same-sex households (see figure 13). Black male same-sex households are over three times as likely as White male same-sex households to be raising nonbiological children (10% vs. three percent respectively).⁴⁰

As illustrated in Figure 15, Black female same-sex couples parent nonbiological children at a similar rate to Black married couples (14% vs. 13% respectively). Black male same-sex couples parent nonbiological children at only slightly lower rates (10%). Ten percent of Black female same-sex households are raising both

Figure 12: Children present in same-sex households



14% of Black female same-sex households have at least one nonbiological child, compared to only 6% of White female same-sex households.

39. According to the 1990 Census, 60% of Black partnered women in same-sex relationships, 50% of American Indian partnered women, 43% of Hispanic partnered women, and 30% of Asian/Pacific Islander partnered women had given birth, compared to only 23% of White partnered women in same-sex households. Bradford, J., Barrett, K., & Honnold, J.A. (2002).

40. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).



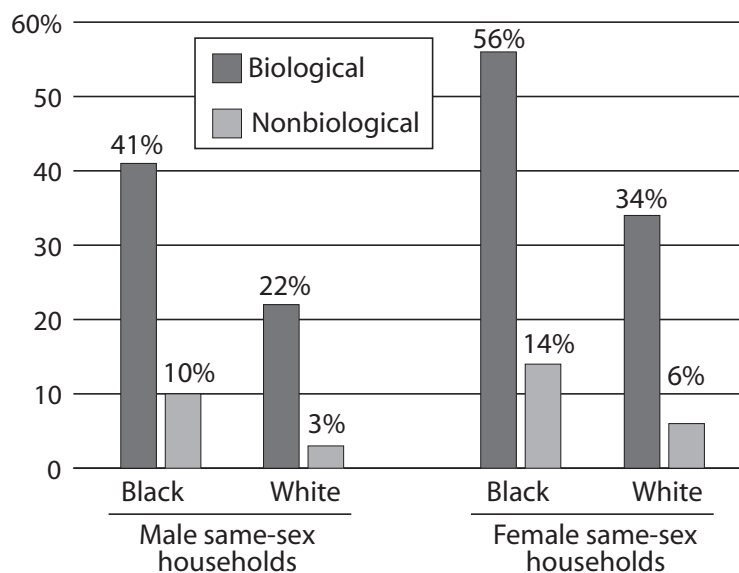
a biological and a nonbiological child; six percent of Black male same-sex households are raising both a biological and a nonbiological child.

This is significant because those who oppose same-sex marriage also often argue against allowing same-sex couples to adopt children.⁴¹ In fact, six states now prohibit foster and/or adoptive parenting by lesbian and gay people or same-sex couples.⁴² Also, courts around the country still take sexual orientation and gender identity into account in awarding child custody.⁴³

Many of these parenting bans were passed in the context of political and social debates about same-sex marriage. For example, in the months following the December 1999 Vermont high court ruling in support of equal treatment of same-sex couples, several states debated anti-gay parenting bills, and Mississippi and Utah adopted anti-gay parenting laws. In 2003 and 2004, as Americans debated marriage for same-sex couple and the repeal of archaic sex laws criminalizing private, adult consensual behavior, several more states considered anti-gay parenting laws, and two (North Dakota and Oklahoma) passed such laws.

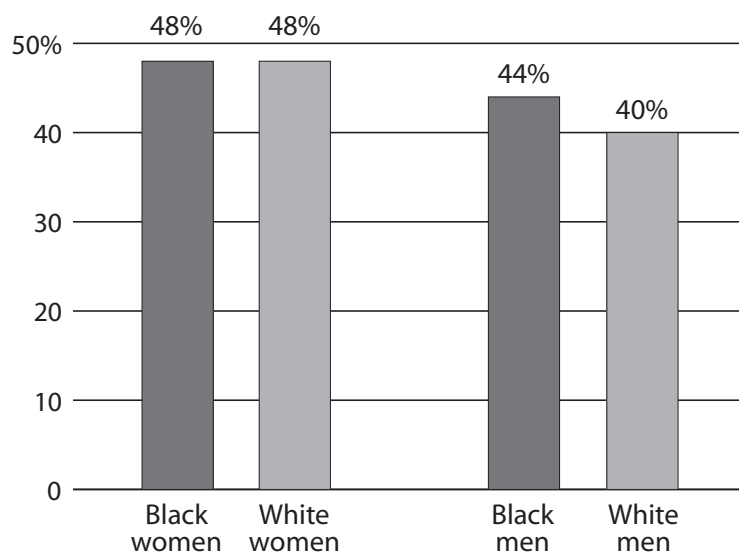
Whether the children in these households are already adopted or simply living in the household, the 2000 Census proves that Black same-sex couples are parenting nonbiological children at high rates. Equitable adoption and parenting laws would benefit these families because if parents have no legal relationship to their children, they cannot include them in their health insurance coverage or make decisions about how they will be cared for if one parent dies or the couple separates.

Figure 13: Types of children present in same-sex-headed households*



* Many parents raise both biological and nonbiological children; there is significant overlap between the two types of parenting.

Figure 14: Partnered men and women in same-sex households who were previously married



41. For example, on January 23, 2004, Focus on the Family ran a full-page ad in the *Boston Globe* calling gay and lesbian parenting “a massive, untested social experiment with coming generations of children.” Cahill, S. (2004). *Same-sex marriage in the United States: Focus on the facts*. New York: Lexington Books. pp. 31-32.

42. Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas, Utah, North Dakota, and Oklahoma have anti-gay adoption or foster care laws or policies. For more information see Cahill, S. (2004). *Same-sex marriage in the United States: Focus on the facts*. New York: Lexington Books. p. 54.

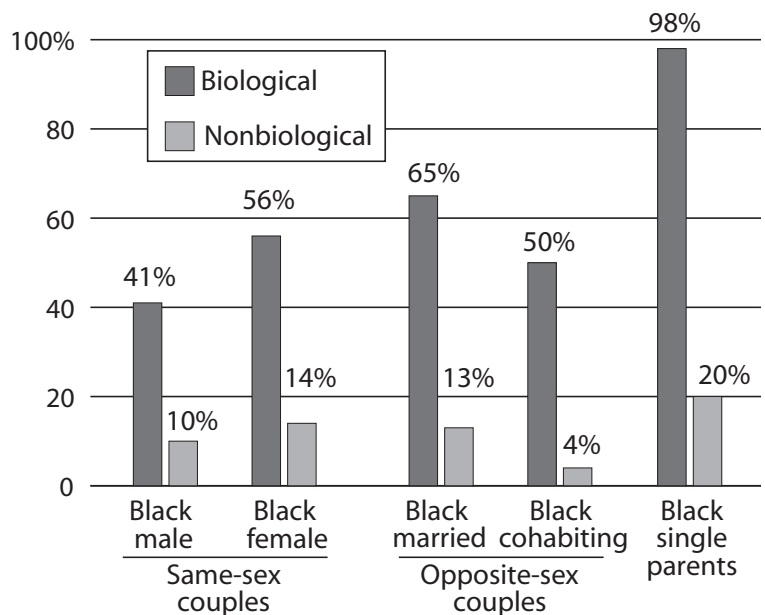
43. Cahill, S., Ellen, M., & Tobias, S. (2002). *Family policy: Issues affecting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. p. 73-77.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there are over 100,000 children waiting to be adopted nationwide, and 56% of them are Black.⁴⁴ But in 1997, there were qualified adoptive parents available for only 20,000 of the children then waiting to be adopted.⁴⁵ Approximately 588,000 children are currently in foster care.⁴⁶ Forty-two percent of children in foster care are African American, even though they represent only 17% of all American children.⁴⁷ Sadly, many children age into adulthood while in foster care. Children who remain in foster care for much of their childhood are more likely to have emotional problems, delinquency, substance abuse, and academic problems. This is not surprising given that some children in foster care live in 20 or more homes by the time they are 18 years old.⁴⁸ Barring lesbians, gay men, and same-sex couples from adopting or foster parenting decreases the number of potential suitable homes for children in need.

The vast majority of children's advocacy organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics,⁴⁹ the National Association of Social Workers,⁵⁰ and the American Psychological Association (APA),⁵¹ recognize that lesbian and gay parents are just as good as heterosexual parents, and that children thrive in lesbian- and gay-headed families. According to the APA, "not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents."⁵² Other peer reviewed social science research has also found that children being raised by lesbian and gay parents are not disadvantaged relative to children being

Many Black same-sex couples are parenting nonbiological children. With no legal relationship to their children, they cannot include them in health insurance coverage or make decisions about how they will be cared for if one parent dies or the couple separates.

Figure 15: Types of children present in Black families*



* Many parents raise both biological and nonbiological children; there is significant overlap between the two types of parenting.

44. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). Factsheet: How many children are waiting to be adopted. Retrieved August 10, 2004, from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/afcars/rpt0199/ar0199e.htm>
45. Petit, M. & Curtis, P. (1997). *Child abuse and neglect: A look at the states*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
46. Child Welfare League of America (n.d.). Facts and figures. Retrieved March 1, 2004, from <http://www.cwla.org/programs/foster-care/factsheet.htm>
47. Roberts, D. (2002). *Shattered bonds: The color of child welfare*. New York: Basic Books.
48. Eagle, R. (1994). The separation experience of children in long-term care: Theory, resources, and implications for practice. *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 1994.
49. Perrin, E.C. and The Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2002). Technical report: Co-parent or second-parent adoption by same-sex parents. *Pediatrics*. 109(2): 341-344.
50. Ferrero, E., Freker, J., and Foster, T. (2002). Too high a price: The case against restricting gay parenting. New York: ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project. Available at <http://www.letthemstay.com/pdfs/gayadoptionbook.pdf>
51. Patterson, C.J. (1995). *Lesbian and gay parenting: A resource for psychologists*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Available at <http://www.apa.org/pi/parent.html>
52. Ibid. These conclusions are likely to be true of bisexual parents as well. Although there is a lack of research focusing specifically on bisexual parents, clearly there are bisexuals in the same-sex couples included in the samples of many of these studies as well as in many opposite-sex couples. Since many of these studies do not ask people to self-identify by sexual orientation, there are no conclusive findings on bisexual parents.

raised by heterosexual parents.⁵³ Bisexual parents are included in both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. There is no justification for discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people or same-sex couples in custody, visitation, foster care and adoption laws. Adoption statutes should be amended to provide a process by which unmarried partners may adopt children in the same manner as step-parents.

Over half of all Black same-sex couples are raising children.

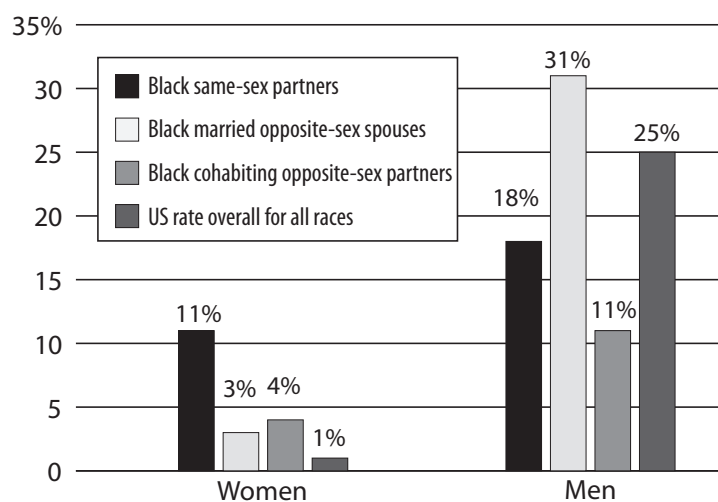
Despite attempts by anti-gay conservatives and politicians to portray the terms “gay” and “family” as mutually exclusive, our analysis of 2000 Census data irrefutably shows that Black same-sex couples are forming stable families. Over half of them are raising children. Simply documenting the existence of Black same-sex couple families with children is important in and of itself. Additionally, since parenting is more prevalent among Black female same-sex households than among White female same-sex households, our analysis also provides quantitative evidence that anti-gay parenting policies would disproportionately harm Black female same-sex couples and Black children.

MILITARY SERVICE

Black heterosexual people have been allowed to serve in a desegregated military since 1948. However, before President Harry S. Truman’s executive order to integrate the military, racist policymakers claimed that Black people had a propensity for crime and higher rates of disease, which would undermine the military mission. More than 50 years later, similar arguments have been used to justify not allowing lesbian, gay, and bisexual people to serve openly in the military.⁵⁴ Like Black people who served in World War II, knowing that they would return to a segregated society, lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the military of all races risk their lives to fight for a country in which they do not have equal rights and protections.

Black same-sex households include many people who report that they are veterans. As illustrated in Figures 16 and 17, partnered Black and White women in same-sex households report serving at three times the rate of Black women living with a husband or cohabiting with a male partner.⁵⁵ Partnered Black men in same-sex households serve at about two-thirds the

Figure 16: Black Americans reporting veteran status



53. Stacey, J., & Biblarz, T. (2001). (How) does the sexual orientation of the parent matter? *American Sociological Review*, 66(2):159-183.
 54. Bianco, D. A. (1996). Echoes of prejudice: The debates over race and sexuality in the armed forces. In Rimmerman, C. (1996). *Gay rights, military wrongs: Political perspectives on lesbians and gays in the military*. New York: Garland Publishing. pp. 47-70.
 55. Eleven percent of partnered Black women in same-sex households reported that they were veterans compared to 3% of married women. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level (for a definition of statistical significance see Technical Appendix).

rate of Black men married to a woman (18% vs. 31%) and at a slightly higher rate than Black men cohabiting with a woman (11%). Overall, according to 2000 Census one percent of women and 25% of men in the U.S. are veterans.⁵⁶

Figure 17 illustrates that Black women with same-sex partners serve in the military at a greater rate than White women with same-sex partners (11% vs. 9%). Black men with same-sex partners are more likely to have served than White men with same-sex partners (18% vs. 15%).

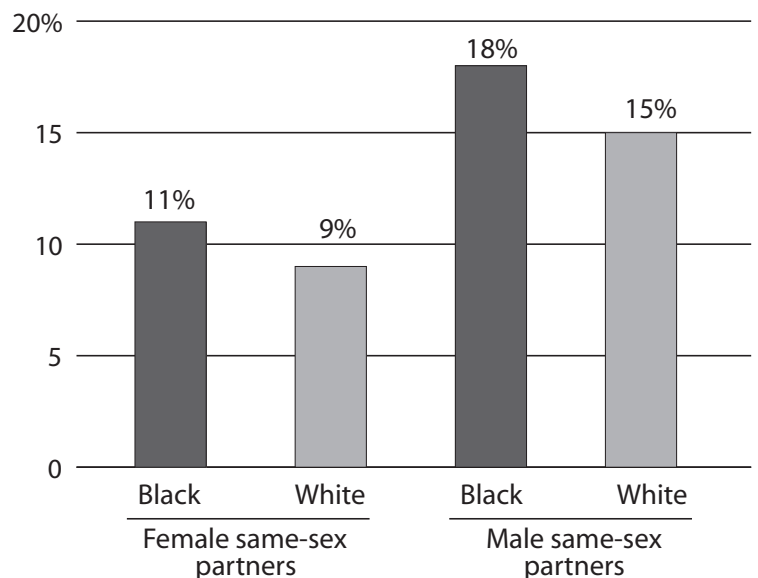
Since Black same-sex partners serve in the military at disproportionately higher rates than other groups, discriminatory military policies also affect the Black community at a disproportionate rate. For example, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”—which bans openly lesbian, gay and bisexual people from serving—has been used to kick Black women out of the military at a much higher rate than other groups. In fact, Black women are discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” at three times the rate that they serve in the military. Although Black women make up less than one percent of servicemembers, they comprise 3.3% of those discharged under the policy.⁵⁷

Lesbian, gay and bisexual military personnel and veterans suffer from discriminatory military policies, especially when military discharges lead to loss of employment, pay and benefits. During the first 10 years of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” more than 10,000 service members have been discharged at an estimated cost of \$1.2 billion in taxpayer dollars.⁵⁸ Even when lesbian, gay and bisexual servicemembers are able to hide their sexual orientation and avoid being discharged, discriminatory military policy still prevents their same-sex partners from accessing a myriad of veterans’ benefits because they are not legally married. Discrimination against gay veterans continues throughout their lives.

In the face of documented, widespread ant-gay harassment and violence, as well as the challenges presented by “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” data from the 2000 Census indicate that partnered Black same-sex partners have chosen to serve their country in the military at high rates. Revoking “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” would allow them and their families to enjoy the benefits they deserve as servicemembers and veterans.

Partnered Black women in same-sex relationships are three times as likely as other Black women to serve in the U.S. military.

Figure 17: Partnered men and women in same-sex households reporting veteran status



56. Data for this analysis were taken from analyses available at www.va.gov, which use 2000 census data. Bureau of Veterans Affairs (2004). *Sex by age by armed forces status by veteran status for the population 18 years and over*. Available at <http://www.va.gov>

57. Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. (2002). *Conduct unbecoming: The ninth annual report on “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue, Don’t Harass.”* Washington, DC: Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. People can be discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” even if they are not gay or lesbian. This report suggests that women are disproportionately affected by the policy because men accuse women who refuse unwanted sexual advances of being lesbians, or because the women are successful and some men do not want to serve under them.

58. Servicemembers Legal Defense Fund. (2004). *Ten years of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” A disservice to the nation*. Washington, DC: Servicemembers Legal Defense Fund.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Overall, partnered Black men and women in same-sex households report lower educational attainment than partnered White men and women in same-sex households. However, partnered men and women in interracial same-sex relationships (i.e. one Black person and one person of another race who reported the same gender) report very high levels of educational attainment.⁵⁹ Figure 18 illustrates that nearly two-thirds of Black same-sex couples report that they did not access post-secondary education at all. In contrast, only about one-third of Black interracial and White same-sex couples report that they did not access higher education.

Partnered Black men and women in same-sex households report significantly lower levels of postsecondary education than both their White counterparts and individuals in Black interracial same-sex households. Only 40% of Black men and women in same-sex households report completing some level of postsecondary education. In comparison, 71% of people Black interracial same-sex households and 67% of people in White same-sex households report that they completed some college (see figure 18).

Figure 19 illustrates that Black people in same-sex households are slightly less likely to access post-secondary education than Black married people. However, single parents have the lowest levels of post-secondary educational attainment. Overall, Black men are less educated than Black women, and partnered Black men in same-sex households have lower rates of high school completion than Black married men.

Educational attainment is influenced, in part, by the income and wealth of one's parents. Poorly funded school systems may have higher drop-out rates overall. Educational attainment can also influence one's earning tra-

Figure 18: Educational attainment of partnered men and women in same-sex households

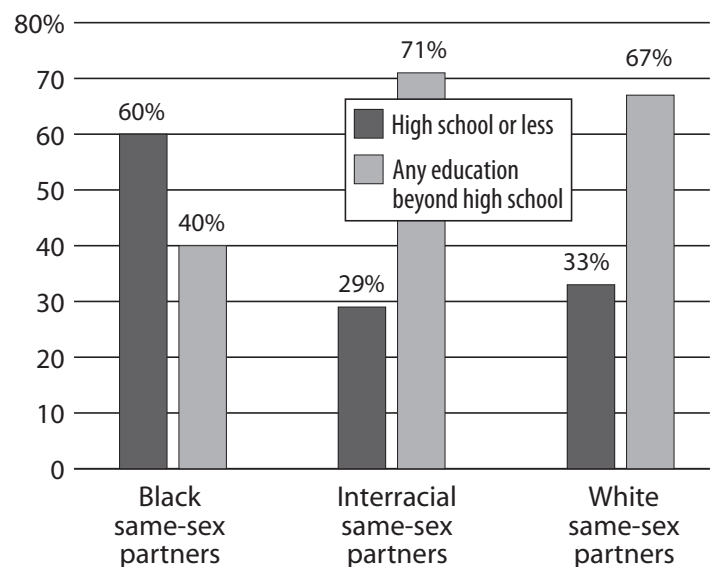
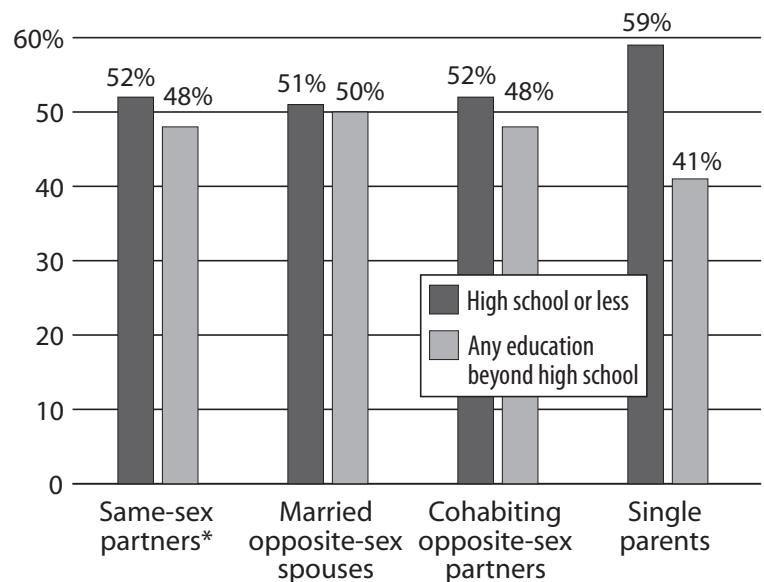


Figure 19: Educational attainment of partnered men and women in Black families



* Includes households in which both partners are Black, as well as Black interracial couples (Black-other).

59. Educational attainment was averaged for both partners in the same-sex couple, regardless of their race. 2000 Census data do not indicate which individual in the same-sex interracial couple is Black and which is of another ethnic group.

jectory over one's lifetime. The fact that partnered Black men and women report less education than both Black married people and individuals in White same-sex households warrants further research as to its impact on the job options and life experiences of Black same-sex couples.

The lower educational attainment among partnered Black men and women in same-sex households compared to Black men and women in general may, in part, reflect the impact of anti-gay harassment and bias on the school experience. A wide body of research has documented a high prevalence of anti-gay harassment and violence in the nation's schools. Children targeted by anti-gay harassment and violence are more likely to skip school or drop out altogether, have trouble paying attention in class or completing homework, and earn lower grades.⁶⁰

60. Cianciotto, J. & Cahill, S. (2003). *Education policy: Issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth*. New York: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. pp. 29-40.



Conclusion and Policy Implications

Tens of thousands of Black same-sex couples, most of them raising children, will be disproportionately harmed if proposed state and federal anti-gay marriage ballot initiatives are approved. For example, Black same-sex partners working for municipal governments may lose domestic partner benefits. Overall, they will continue to be banned from accessing a wide array of state and federal family protections, such as the right to take unpaid leave to care for one's sick partner under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

Using data from the 2000 Census, this report documents the demographics of Black same-sex couples nationwide, and refutes common stereotypes that lesbian and gay people are overwhelmingly White, wealthy, do not have children, and are unable to maintain stable, long-term relationships.⁶¹ In fact, there are over 85,000 Black same-sex couples living in the U.S., representing 14% of all same-sex couples reporting on the Census. These couples earn less than Black married opposite-sex couples, and significantly less than White same-sex couples. Over half of them are raising children. They parent biological, foster and/or adopted children at high rates. They are likely to have lived in the same home with each other and their children for the previous five years, which is a good indicator of family stability.

Federal and state governments provide policies to promote family formation and stability, home ownership, and other values that contribute to community strength and the common good. Black same-sex couples and their families are excluded from many of the benefits of these policies because of anti-gay discrimination. Black female same-sex households are particularly less affluent than Black mar-

Federal and state governments provide policies to promote family formation and stability, home ownership, and other values that contribute to community strength and the common good. Black same-sex couples and their families are excluded from many of the benefits of these policies because of anti-gay discrimination.

61. For example, Concerned Women for America's Janet LaRue recently wrote, "Rosie O'Donnell... is no Rosa Parks... O'Donnell, who could buy her own bus line, represents a status that is the converse of a minority class seeking equal treatment under the law." LaRue, J. (2003, March 22). Homosexuals hijack civil rights bus. Washington, DC: Concerned Women for America. Retrieved September 8, 2004, from <http://www.cwfa.org/printerfriendly.asp?id=5395&department=legal&categoryid=family>; While Rosie O'Donnell's situation clearly differs from that faced by Rosa Parks in 1955, it does not negate the fact that, as a lesbian, she experiences official discrimination at the hands of her government.

ried opposite-sex households. Allowing same-sex couples throughout the country to legally formalize their partnerships will allow them greater economic security, legal protection, and peace of mind. This is especially important as couples age or during times of crisis, such as a partner's illness or death.

Similarly, overturning "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" would positively affect the Black community because it would allow Black lesbian, gay and bisexual people to serve openly without fear of losing their jobs and veterans benefits. Data on military discharges over the past decade under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" indicate that Black women are three times as likely to be targeted under this anti-gay policy.⁶² Despite this widespread anti-gay targeting, partnered Black women in same-sex households were three times as likely as other Black women to serve in the military.

From 2004 to 2006, voters in dozens of states will consider amendments to their state constitutions that would ban marriage as well as more limited forms of legal partner recognition for same-sex couples, such as civil unions and domestic partnerships. For many reasons—including a higher prevalence of parenting, lower relative income, lower home ownership rates, and greater prevalence of public sector employment—Black same-sex households will be disproportionately hurt if these anti-gay family initiatives become law.

62. Servicemembers Legal Defense Fund (2004).



Technical Appendix

GENERAL INFORMATION

This report is based on data from the 2000 U.S. Census. In 1990 and 2000 cohabiting same-sex couples were able to self-identify as “unmarried partners.” In this study we compare Black same-sex households to White same-sex households. We also compare Black same-sex households to Black opposite-sex married couple households, Black opposite-sex unmarried couple households and Black single parent households. While the Census does not gather information about individuals’ sexual orientation or gender identity, it is likely that most of the individuals in cohabiting same-sex couples would identify as “gay,” “lesbian,” “same gender loving,” “homosexual” or some other similar designation. Some would likely identify as bisexual or transgender, as do some individuals in cohabiting or married opposite-sex couples.

PUMS DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Socioeconomic information was compiled through a custom tabulation of the Census Bureau’s five percent Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). We chose to use the five percent PUMS data because the 2000 Census long form provides a more comprehensive picture of Black same-sex households, including, for example, information about military veteran status and educational attainment. These variables are not available in other datasets made publicly available by the Census, such as Summary File One and Two data, which are based on 100% counts of the 2000 Census short form. PUMS data also identified any Black partner living in a same-sex household, whether he or she was the householder or the householder’s partner, making it possible to more thoroughly estimate numbers of Black women and men living with same-sex partners.

PUMS data were processed by Lopez & Cheung, Inc. using the weights provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Therefore, all percentages reported in this study were calculated using weighted responses. This weighting method was verified by Martin O’Connell at the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

Particular care should be taken in interpreting results involving same-sex interracial households, as the raw data for this category represent very small numbers of respondents.

WEIGHTED AVERAGES

In this report, weighted averages are used when combining categories for analysis. For example, to compare a demographic characteristic among Black married opposite-sex couples, the responses for male householder were combined with the responses for female spouse. The Census allows either a male or female to be the householder. For example, among Black opposite-sex married couples a male filled out the Census form as the householder 4.7 times more often than a female reported being the householder. Therefore, a weight of 4.7 was applied to the male householder when averaging responses in that category with responses from the spouse of a married opposite-sex household where the female reported being the householder. In this example, this method allowed for more accurate reporting of averages because the results were not as skewed toward the response rate of male householders, who had the higher raw number of responses.

MARGIN OF ERROR

In this study, plus or minus the margin of error produces a 95% confidence interval. For example, the percentage of male householders in a Black same-sex household with post-secondary education is 48%. The margin of error for male householders in a Black same-sex household was determined to be 2%, so a 95% confidence interval for this value would mean a range of 46% to 50% (this may seem large, but it is based on only 1773 observations—the columns with more observations have smaller margins of error). This is computed as a 95% confidence interval for a binomial proportion parameter (computed at $p=.5$ and $N= N$ raw), and is often referred to as “significant at the .05 level.” The margin of error only applies to the percentage values (i.e., not the median values).

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Throughout this report, statistical tests of significance were performed in order to determine whether the relationship between certain variables was likely to happen by chance. In other words, we wanted to know whether the statistical result was a “fluke.” Specifically, the T-test of statistical significance was used to indicate whether key differences between same-sex couple types (i.e. Black male same-sex households vs. White male same-sex households) simply occurred by chance. To report the extent of any statistically significant differences, statistical procedures and “cut-off” points widely accepted in social science research were used. If the difference was likely to happen by chance less than one time out of 100, it was noted in a footnote to be “significant at the .01 level.”



RACIAL CATEGORIES

To be as inclusive as possible, this report uses “Black alone or in any combination AND not Hispanic” numbers. This means that a head of a same-sex household responded that he or she was either Black alone or Black in combination with any other race; such a respondent was considered to be living in a Black same-sex household.

The 2000 Census was the first decennial census in which people were allowed to mark more than one race. As a consequence, Census 2000 race information is far more complicated, but also richer, than such data from previous censuses. For example, 2000 data include results for single-race as well as multiple-race responses. “Black Alone” corresponds to the respondents who reported Black and no other race category. “Alone” should be considered the minimum population size in any analysis that uses Census 2000 data. “Alone or in Any Combination” should be considered the maximum population size in any analysis that uses Census 2000 data.

FAMILY STRUCTURE DATA REGARDING CHILDREN

Due to limitations with the raw PUMS data, it was impossible to report data for both the householder and the unmarried same-sex partner related to parentage. The assumption that we could get this data on both partners proved impossible. For example, flags in the raw data such as “Own Child Indicator” and “Related Child Indicator”—which we wanted to use as a guide for each householder and partner to determine a child’s relationship/origination—could not be used. These flags are only used on each individual child’s Census record, which we did not analyze in this study. Therefore the child is labeled as “own” or “related,” but the parentage is not discernable. This analysis is recorded under the householder’s person record and based on the aggregate of each child’s record for each unique housing number.

The following are the definition of key variables used in compiling data on parenting:

- **Biological child:** Households with one or more people with natural born son/daughter or stepson/stepdaughter.
- **Nonbiological child:** Households with one or more people with adopted or fostered son/daughter, grandchild, nephew/niece, or foster child. Does not include children who are minor siblings of householders.

TERMINOLOGY

Same-sex partner: A person living with an unmarried partner of the same sex (could be a householder or the unmarried partner of a householder). It is presumed that this represents a mutually supportive, amorous, coupled relationship.

Spouse: A husband or wife in an opposite-sex, married couple household.

Opposite-sex partner: A person living with an unmarried partner of the opposite sex. It is presumed that this represents a mutually supportive, amorous, coupled relationship.

Household: A household includes all people living in a housing unit. One person in each household is designated the householder and completes a Census form for the household. Generally, the householder is the person, or one of the people, in whose name the home is owned, being bought or rented.

Same-sex household population: A population encompassing people living with same-sex partners.

Interracial household: A household where one partner self-identifies as “Black alone or in any combination and not Hispanic” and the other partner is of any other race or Hispanic.



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National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

policy institute bestsellers

Caregiving

AMONG LESBIAN, GAY,
BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER
ELDERS IN NEW YORK

by Marjorie H. Cantor, Mark Brennan,
and R. Andrew Shippy

The largest-ever study of caregiving among LGBT people 50 and older documents how central older gay people are to caregiving, both for family of origin members as well as for same-sex partners and close friends. It also examines unequal treatment under key policies such as the Family and Medical Leave Act. (June 2004; 108 pp.; \$10.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Transitioning our Shelters

A GUIDE FOR MAKING
HOMELESS SHELTERS SAFE
FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE
by Lisa Mottet and John M. Ohle

The problem of unsafe shelters for transgender people is pervasive. *Transitioning our Shelters* is a guide designed for shelters that want to provide safe shelter for transgender people but are not sure how to do so. A joint publication of the Task Force and the National Coalition for the Homeless, the Guide provides many answers to concerns about safety and privacy for transgender residents based on successes at real shelters across the country, the bulk of which are addressed without monetary expenditures. (January 2004; 56 pp.; \$10.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Education Policy

ISSUES AFFECTING
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,
AND TRANSGENDER YOUTH
by Jason Cianciotto and Sean Cahill

Education Policy provides a comprehensive overview of social science research on the extent and impact of harassment and violence against LGBT students, as well as the public policy interventions that support LGBT students and make schools safer. It includes the first in-depth analysis of how President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act affects LGBT students, profiles eight students who stood up to anti-LGBT abuse, and articulates an agenda for future research and policy analysis. (November 2003; 168 pp.; \$20.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Family Policy

ISSUES AFFECTING GAY,
LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND
TRANSGENDER ELDERS

by Sean Cahill, Mitra Ellen, and Sarah Tobias

Groundbreaking in its breadth and depth, this report examines family policy as it relates to LGBT people and their loved ones. It provides information useful to those advancing supportive legislation and policy, particularly at the state and local levels. Covers partner recognition; antigay adoption and foster policies; youth and elder issues; health care and end-of-life concerns; and the impact of welfare reform and the faith-based initiative. (December 2002; 216 pp.; \$20.00; www.ngltf.org/library/)

Say it Loud and I'm Black Proud

BLACK PRIDE SURVEY 2000

by Juan Battle, Cathy J. Cohen,
Dorian Warren, Gerard Ferguson,
and Suzette Audam

This largest-ever study of Black LGBT people is the result of a two-year collaboration between nine Black LGBT Pride organizations, the Task Force Policy Institute, and five African-American researchers. The survey of nearly 2,700 respondents documents significant and often surprising demographics, experiences, and policy priorities of Black LGBT people. (March 2002; 86 pp.; \$10.00; www.ngltf.org/library/)

Transgender Equality

A HANDBOOK FOR ACTIVISTS
AND POLICYMAKERS

by Paisley Currah and Shannon Minter,
introduction by Jameson Green

A handbook providing activists and policymakers with the tools they need to pass transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination and anti-violence legislation. This handbook is an invaluable resource guide providing model legislative language, talking points, responses to frequently asked questions, and a comprehensive resource listing. (June 2000; 96 pp.; \$10.00; www.ngltf.org/library/)

Other Task Force Publications

Campus Climate

FOR GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Based on a survey of nearly 1700 students, faculty, and staff at 14 colleges and universities across the country, this report, by Susan R. Rankin, documents anti-LGBT bias and harassment, along with levels of institutional support for LGBT people. It highlights differences in experiences between various identity groups and concludes with recommendations for creating an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBT people. (May 2003; 70 pp.; \$10.00; www.nglrf.org/library/)

The 2000 Census and Same-Sex Households

In 2000, the U.S. Census allowed same-sex couples living together to identify themselves as "unmarried partners." This national data set offers a rich trove of information on members of our community, easily accessible on-line. Maps show concentrations of same-sex households in all 50 states and a dozen major cities. (October 2002; 162 pp.; \$20.00; www.nglrf.org/library/)

Leaving Our Children Behind

WELFARE REFORM AND THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

This report, by Sean Cahill and Kenneth T. Jones, describes the reactionary agenda of senior policymakers in the Bush administration to change social service provision in the United States. It examines welfare reform and the impact of marriage and fatherhood initiatives, abstinence-only-until-marriage education, and the faith-based initiative on the LGBT community. (December 2001; 112 pp.; \$10.00 www.nglrf.org/library/)

Social Discrimination and Health

THE CASE OF LATINO GAY MEN AND HIV RISK

This report, by renowned AIDS researchers Rafael Diaz and George Ayala, documents the correlations among homophobia, racism, poverty, and HIV risk, and has significant implications for prevention strategies. Although Latinos were the subject of this case study, the findings are relevant to other communities of color and marginalized groups. Available in English and Spanish. (July 2001; SOLD OUT; download at www.nglrf.org/library/)

Outing Age

PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES AFFECTING GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ELDERS

This groundbreaking report reviews social science literature and explains what we do and do not know about the demographics of LGBT elders. *Outing Age* outlines major public policy issues facing LGBT seniors—including federal aging programs, disability, long-term care and caregiving, nursing homes, and Social Security—and presents recommendations for advocacy to move public policy toward equal treatment of this population. (Nov. 2000; SOLD OUT; download at www.nglrf.org/library/)

Out and Voting II

THE GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL VOTE IN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, 1990-1998

An in-depth profile of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual voting bloc and the first-ever analysis of the impact of this emerging constituency in national congressional elections. It was written by Dr. Robert Bailey of the Rutgers University School of Public Policy and Administration. Among the report's findings: out LGB voters comprise roughly 5% of the national electorate, and 8.8% of voters in cities of 500,000 or more. (January 2000; 54 pp.; \$10.00; www.nglrf.org/library/)

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