



The Professional  
Association  
of Foreign  
Service Officers  
  
L'Association  
professionnelle  
des agents du  
Service extérieur

February 10, 1994

The Honourable Arthur C. Eggleton, P.C., M.P.  
President of the Treasury Board  
Room 209  
House of Commons  
111 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

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REÇU - RECEIVED Cabinet du Président du Conseil du Trésor President's Office - Treasury Board	

Dear Minister Eggleton,

On behalf of the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO), I am writing you concerning your recent announcement that the Government is committed to changing human rights laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. We warmly welcome this attempt to formally amend the Human Rights Act. We were also pleased to note that the Government is reviewing the question of benefits for same sex domestic partners. It has been PAFSO's consistent position that the denial of such benefits for same sex domestic partners constitutes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation contrary to the Canadian Human Rights Act and Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As you are aware, this view was recently reinforced by the decision of Marguerite-Marie Galipeau, adjudicator of the Public Service Staff Relations Board, who ruled that Environment Canada's refusal to grant a gay employee family leave care and bereavement leave violated the Canadian Human Rights Act and the provisions of the complainants own collective agreement.

The continued denial of benefits to same sex domestic partners is of considerable concern to PAFSO as it makes the situation particularly difficult for our gay and lesbian members serving at Canadian missions abroad. When our members reside in Canada, they at least have the right to live with their partners and their partners have access to employment opportunities and to Canada's excellent health care system. This changes radically when foreign service personnel are assigned to Canadian missions overseas, a situation faced by few other federal government employees who are gay or lesbian. To date, and despite limited assistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, it has proved extremely difficult to obtain long term visas for the same sex domestic partners of our members. Even when this visa has been secured, it does not carry with it the right to engage in employment, a benefit cherished by the spouses of our heterosexual members who may take advantage of reciprocal employment agreements negotiated by our Department. A further concern is that in many instances, particularly in Europe and the United States, access to adequate health care insurance is prohibitively expensive.

The time has now come to end this discrimination. We urge an early announcement that your Government is prepared to extend all appropriate benefits to the long term same sex domestic partners of Canadian gays and lesbians. This courageous decision would be welcomed by PAFSO and by all Canadians who care deeply about human rights. We look forward to hearing your views on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Colin Robertson', written in a cursive style.

D. Colin Robertson  
President