

**Selected Quotes from Friend-of-the-Court Briefs submitted to the Arkansas
Supreme Court in *Howard v. Child Welfare Agency Review Board*
December 19, 2005**

The Child Welfare League of America and the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute:

(D)espite a chronic shortage of qualified foster parents, the Child Welfare Agency Review Board has decided to ban this one group of willing parents from service—even if they otherwise pass the rigorous screening process that Arkansas imposes to ensure that prospective foster parents are qualified and even if they would be the best fit for a particular child in need. The result is to deny many vulnerable children the chance to be cared for by loving foster parents with whom they could flourish.

...

The CWARB's prohibition on foster parenting by gay men and lesbians or anyone living with them bears no rational, let alone compelling and narrowly tailored, connection to its purported goal of furthering the health, safety, and welfare of foster children because (1) there is no credible basis to conclude that parenting by lesbians or gay men disadvantages children, and (2) the categorical ban undermines the prevailing individualized approach to foster care placement and is actually detrimental to the best interests of children.

...

The trial court's factual conclusions and the policy statements of all the professional organizations discussed above follow from study after study that consistently has demonstrated both that gay and lesbian parents are as capable as heterosexual parents and that children of gay and lesbian parents fare just as well as children of heterosexual parents....

...

Broadening the pool of prospective foster parents permits child welfare agencies to better match a child's individual needs with the strength and skills offered by each potential foster parent.

...

*American Psychological Association, the Arkansas Psychological Association, the
National Association of Social Workers, and the Arkansas NASW:*

(A) person's sexual orientation tells nothing about that person's suitability to be a foster parent. Empirical research has consistently shown that it is the quality of parenting that predicts children's psychological and social adjustment, not the parents' sexual

orientation or gender. Such research has consistently failed to find differences between heterosexual and lesbian and gay parents in their parenting skills. Nor have the children of homosexuals been found to manifest any deficits compared to children raised by heterosexual parents.

...

The CWARB regulation was premised partially on the Board's belief that a "homosexual household is an inferior family structure in terms of promoting the best interests of a child."... This belief has no basis in fact. Quite to the contrary, many same-sex couples are currently raising children, and the scientific evidence demonstrates that gay and lesbian parents are just as capable as heterosexual parents.

...

The research literature on gay, lesbian, and bisexual parents includes more than two dozen empirical studies. These studies vary in the quality of their samples, research design, measurement methods, and data analysis techniques. However, they are impressively consistent in their failure to identify any deficits in the development of children raised in a lesbian or gay household.

...

(T)he scientific research that has directly compared outcomes for children with gay and lesbian parents with outcomes for children with heterosexual parents has been remarkably consistent in showing that lesbian and gay parents are every bit as fit and capable as heterosexual parents, and their children are as psychologically healthy and well-adjusted as children reared by heterosexual parents. Empirical research over the past two decades has failed to find any meaningful differences in the parenting ability of lesbian and gay parents compared to heterosexual parents.