

American Sociological Association

Cross filed in *Perry* and *Windsor*

The social science consensus is both conclusive and clear: children fare just as well when they are raised by same-sex parents as when they are raised by opposite-sex parents. This consensus holds true across a wide range of child outcome indicators and is supported by numerous nationally representative studies. (p. 24)

Decades of methodologically sound social science research, especially multiple nationally representative studies and the expert evidence introduced in the district courts below, confirm that positive child wellbeing is the product of stability in the relationship between the two parents, stability in the relationship between the parents and child, and socioeconomic stability. Whether a child is raised by same-sex or opposite-sex parents has no bearing on a child's wellbeing. (p. 2)

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[S]tudies reveal that children raised by same-sex parents fare just as well as children raised by opposite-sex couples across a wide spectrum of child-wellbeing measures: academic performance, cognitive development, social development, psychological health, early sexual activity, and substance abuse. (p.4)

[T]he studies relied on by BLAG, the Proposition 8 Proponents, and their amici examine child outcomes within the context of opposite-sex relationships, and do not address the impact of same-sex parents on child wellbeing. These studies do not undermine the social science consensus, supported by the most reliable studies available, that children raised by same-sex parents fare just as well as children raised by opposite-sex parents across a broad spectrum of indicators. (p. 23)

Summary of signers and brief

The American Sociological Association ("ASA") has more than 14,000 members, including most sociologists holding doctoral degrees from accredited universities. The ASA has a long history of providing social science research to the judicial system. As *amici* in support of the Windsor and Perry plaintiffs, the ASA provides social science research showing "[w]hether a child is raised by same-sex or opposite-sex parents has no bearing on a child's wellbeing."

Notable longer quotes

"[A]s the overwhelming body of social science research confirms, whether a child is raised by same-sex or opposite-sex parents has no bearing on a child's wellbeing.¹ Instead, the consensus is that the key factors affecting child wellbeing are stable family environments and parental socioeconomic status, neither of which is related to the sex or sexual orientation of a child's parents." (p. 10)

¹ Notwithstanding certain critics' blanket dismissal of some of the studies underlying the social science research consensus, *see, e.g.*, Brief for Social Science Professors as Amicus Curiae Supporting Petitioner–Hollingsworth, No. 12-144, and Respondent –BLAG, No. 12-307 at 13-21 (U.S. Jan. 29, 2013), the ASA's review of the studies confirms that they are methodologically sound and conform to the highest standards of sociological research.

“The studies relied on by BLAG, the Proposition 8 Proponents, and their amici fail to support their claim that children fare better with opposite-sex parents than same-sex parents, because nearly all of the studies fail to examine same-sex parents or their children...Moreover, some of the findings in the studies are mischaracterized by the amici supporting BLAG and the Proposition 8 Proponents and, in fact, support the social science consensus—that is, children fare just as well with same-sex parents.” (p. 11)

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“In an effort to undermine the social science consensus, several amici rely heavily on one study conducted by Mark Regnerus. [*Mark Regnerus, How Different Are the Adult Children of Parents Who Have Same-Sex Relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Survey, 41 Social Science Research 752 (2012)*]. Critically, for multiple reasons and as Regnerus acknowledges, his study did not examine, and provides no conclusions regarding, the wellbeing of children who lived with and were raised by same-sex parents.” (p. 11)

“Regnerus tried to remedy the fact that his initial published research did not analyze whether the children had actually lived with the parent who, according to the adult child, had at some point, been “romantically involved” with someone of the same sex. [*See Mark Regnerus, Parental Same-Sex Relationships, Family Instability, and Subsequent Life Outcomes for Adult Children: Answering Critics of the New Family Structures Study with Additional Analyses, 41 Social Science Research 1367, 1369 (2012)*] Nevertheless, Regnerus’s follow-up analysis does not resolve the problems inherent in his initial analysis and contains many of the same shortcomings.” (p. 15)

“The other studies cited by BLAG, the Proposition 8 Proponents, and their *amici* in no way undermine the consensus of social science research that children of same-sex couples fare just as well as those of opposite-sex couples... Accordingly, they cannot be relied upon as scientific evidence regarding the effects of same-sex parenting.” (p.16-17)

“BLAG, the Proposition 8 Proponents, and their *amici* rely on studies examining the impact of stepparents, divorced parents, and single parents on child wellbeing outcomes, and use these studies to argue that two biological parents are necessary to positive child outcomes.” (p. 17)

“Aside from not specifically addressing same-sex parents, the studies regarding stepparents and divorce indicate that child outcomes are, on average, not as positive because of the disruption caused by divorce or the introduction of a new parent into the family, but do not indicate that the source of the negative outcomes is related to the fact that the stepparent is not biologically related to the child.” (p. 18)

“[T]he authors of one of the principal studies relied on by BLAG—the Child Trends study—have publicly responded that their study focused on children being raised in families headed by single parents, stepparents, and married, opposite-sex parents—not same-sex parents... The Child Trends study concluded something entirely different than what was claimed by BLAG.” (p. 18-19)

“The *amici* also rely on a number of studies that examine the parental roles of mothers and fathers within the context of opposite-sex parent families and claim that these studies demonstrate that children’s wellbeing depends on having both a male and female parent.” (p. 21)

“BLAG, the Proposition 8 Proponents, and their *amici* ignore the fact that the research regarding different parenting roles and styles indicates that those roles are relative and nothing in the research indicates that same-sex couples are not able to provide such relative parenting dynamics.” (p. 21-22)

“[A]rguments based on rigid gender roles should be rejected as this Court has declined to rely upon “outdated misconceptions” and “loose-fitting characterizations” regarding gender.” (p. 22)

Amici Curiae

The American Sociological Association has more than 14,000 members, including most sociologists holding doctoral degrees from accredited universities. The ASA regularly presents consensus sociologists research findings to the courts. ASA findings are regularly relied upon by the courts.