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June 25, 1996

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Member of the House of
Representatives of
the State of Colorado
Post Office Box 480246
Denver, Colorado 80248

Dear Diana:

Thank you for getting in touch with me regarding same-sex marriages. I have stated my opposition to legislation that would legalize same-sex marriage, but I strongly believe that issues like this one should not be used to tear our communities apart. America is a rich fabric of shared experience, and it is of the utmost importance that our nation work to expand that common ground.

My Administration has taken more steps than any other to bring the gay and lesbian communities to the table. We have more openly gay and lesbian individuals serving in appointed positions, and their impact, through both their expertise and their efforts to advocate for the concerns of gay men and lesbians, has been significant. My Administration made history when we held the first briefing at the White House for gay and lesbian elected officials. We have also opened the door for qualified gays and lesbians to receive top security clearances.

Throughout my life, I have sought to heighten public awareness and promote inclusion in order to send a powerful message of equality and acceptance. Increased opportunity makes citizens more productive, building stronger communities and a stronger nation. I believe that we must continue to help people rise as far as their talents and determination can take them so that we can make the most out of our great diversity.

As I continue fighting to end discrimination and protect the civil rights of every citizen in our society, I appreciate knowing your thoughts.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON A

BC/JB/JRS/ws (Corres. #3003515)
(6-25.marriage)

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State Representative
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DENVER
80203

ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER
Member:
Judiciary Committee
Legal Services Committee
Legislative Council



May 23, 1996

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: The Defense of Marriage Act

Dear Mr. President:

As a Democratic member of the Colorado House of Representatives and as a concerned American, I urge you to reconsider your intention to sign into law the Defense of Marriage Act, which is currently working its way through Congress.

As you know, my state has only this week ended a four-year long battle concerning the rights of gays, lesbians and bisexuals to live their lives in equality with all other Americans. I fully endorse and support the courageous decision of the Supreme Court and I applaud the six justices who formed the majority for reaching a morally sound ruling that exposed the absence of any legitimate rationale for the enactment of Amendment 2. Now the same right-wing groups who proposed Amendment 2 are using the federal anti-marriage legislation as a means to damage your relationship with gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans.

You may not be aware that my colleagues and I faced the same issue during the legislative session that just ended. I am proud to say that I led the fight to defeat same-sex marriage legislation when it was pending in the Colorado statehouse. As I stated then -- and urge you to consider now -- this type of legislation is premature and mean-spirited. Because no state currently allows same-sex marriage, this legislation is ill-timed. Legislation should be used constructively, to provide a better and stronger nation, not as a reactive response to speculation by fear-mongers. Notably, the same forces that are pressuring you to sign this bill are the most strident proponents of "federalism," *except* when it suits their extreme agenda. Governance of marriage is one such area -- the federal government has never regulated marriage and it should not start doing so now!

As I stated to Governor Roy Romer when Colorado's version of anti-marriage legislation was sent to him: Now is the time for moral leadership. Please reconsider signing into law an act that will be harmful and divisive to the country and to our party. As Governor Romer noted in his veto remarks on the Colorado legislation, vetoing a proposed law that is speculative and mean-spirited is *not* the same thing as promoting or even condoning the concept of same-sex marriage.

On behalf of my gay, lesbian and bisexual constituents, I urge you to veto the Defense of Marriage Act should it be sent to you by the Congress.

Respectfully,

Diana DeGette
Member, Colorado House of Representatives