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Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, September 1996 DOMA [Defense of Marriage Act] -
Final Draft

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DRAFT

September __, 1996

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, we urge you to reconsider your stated intention to sign the so-called Defense of Marriage Act ("DOMA"). We make this request because of our deep concern that enactment of DOMA would hinder our nation's effort to prevent HIV transmission.

At the White House AIDS summit in December 1995, you reminded the nation that homophobia impedes the national fight against AIDS. Individuals who lack basic self-respect because they are victims of homophobia are less likely to heed prevention messages that urge persons to protect themselves and others. Indeed, several studies have documented that gay and bisexual men with higher levels of internalized homophobia are at increased risk for HIV.

DOMA perpetuates the homophobia that hinders effective HIV prevention. As you have publicly suggested, DOMA is a punitive and wholly unnecessary initiative. Its central purpose is to express the belief that gay men and lesbians are second-class citizens who lack the value of other Americans. Because DOMA is directly contrary to the nation's effort to prevent new HIV infections, we encourage you to reconsider your willingness to sign this legislation.

Sincerely,

Scott Hitt, Chair
on behalf of ~~the~~ Members of the
Presidential Advisory Council on
HIV/AIDS

APPROVED
Signature: _____
Date: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

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