

# The Privatization of Social Services from Public to Sectarian: Negative Consequences for America's Gays and Lesbians

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**ABSTRACT.** This article explores the privatization of social services from public to sectarian points of view while examining the implications of the *Charitable Choice* movement on the gay and lesbian community. The history of this movement is explored from a developmental perspective outlining the socioeconomic makeup of gays and lesbians, the societal perceptions and mythology of the economic status of homosexuals, and actual figures related to the number of gays and lesbians who rely on publicly supported social service providers. The article explores the history as well as the positive and negative aspects this type of privatization movement involves. Finally, a comprehensive assessment of the effects of this movement on the gay and lesbian community is presented and future recommendations will be made. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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Since the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, the accessibility and feasibility of religious organizations and institutions in competition for federal and state funds to provide social services have increased. A study completed by Lieberman and Cummings (2002) for the General Accounting Office (GAO) found “at least 19 states have contracted with FBOs (faith-based organizations) to provide some welfare-related services” (p. 2). PRWORA contains a provision known as Charitable Choice, which decreases the barriers of religious organizations in their ability to compete for federal and state funding to provide social services (Davis, 1996; Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; Cahill & Jones, 2002; Glennon, 2000; Cnaan & Bodie, 2002; Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2002; Knippenberg, 2003).

The PRWORA provision of Charitable Choice was legislated under the Clinton Administration in 1996 and has been largely embraced and expanded by the Bush Administration (Yang, 2001; Cahill & Jones, 2002; Cnaan & Bodie, 2002; Jean, 2002; Rostow, 2003). Charitable Choice is specifically found in Section 104 of PRWORA. Bartkowski and Regis (1999) provide an overview of Charitable Choice:

As outlined in Section 104 of PRWORA, state governments that opt to contract with independent sector social service providers cannot legally exclude faith-based organizations from consideration simply because they are religious in nature. Consequently, the language of “choice” in this legislation is designed to underscore the importance to giving religious congregations the same opportunities that secular nonprofit agencies enjoy in competing for purchase-of-service contracts with state governments. Furthermore, Charitable Choice aims to ensure that state governments cannot censor religious expression—i.e., religious symbols or practices—among faith-based organizations that are selected to provide state-funded social services. (p. 8)

The White House’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (2001), the executive overseer of Charitable Choice, has outlined three main objectives of its initiatives:

1. "Identifying and eliminating improper federal barriers to effective faith-based and community-serving programs through legislative, regulatory, and programmatic reform;
2. Stimulating an outpouring of private giving to nonprofits, faith-based programs, and community groups by expanding tax deductions and through other initiatives;
3. Pioneering a new model of cooperation through Federal initiatives that expand the involvement of faith-based and community groups in after-school and literacy services, help the children of prisoners, and support other citizens in need" (pp. 9-10).

This privatization effort applies to services under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). In addition, it is applicable to Food stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and a wide range of services that will help TANF recipients become more self-reliant (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; Cnaan & Bodie, 2001).

The scope of service delivery religious organizations are able to contract for could be considered exhaustive. As Cnaan and Bodie (2001) describe:

The range of services that faith-based organizations can contract with states or counties to provide includes the following areas: food (such as subsidized meals, food pantry, nutrition education, food budgeting counseling, and soup kitchens); work (such as job search, job-skills training, job-readiness training, vocational education, general equivalency diploma preparation, and English as a Second Language programs); community services; domestic violence counseling; medical and health services (such as abstinence education, drug and alcohol treatment centers, health clinics, wellness centers, and immunization programs); and maternity homes (such as residential care, second-chance homes, and supervised community housing). (pp. 224-225)

Both conservative (right-wing) and liberal (left-wing) factions have voiced concerns regarding this privatization effort and the implications Charitable Choice has on the rights of both recipients of social services and the religious organizations involved in the allocation of services (Glennon, 2000; Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2002). Religious conservative concerns stem around possible increased bureaucratic red-tape associated with government funding and a trickle-down effect to organiza-

tions such as the Church of Scientology and the Nation of Islam (Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2002).

Civil libertarians “object to provisions that, for the first time, would allow employment discrimination with public funds, and they worry that the legislation (Charitable Choice) is part of a new assault on the separation of church and state” (Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2002, p. 4).

But the criticisms and concerns gays and lesbians possess regarding this movement is in many ways unique. Spiritual violence (the validation of hatred and discriminatory practice against homosexuals because of religious-associated immorality) is a prevalent issue in America today. Religion and homosexuality are intertwined as many dominant religions such as Judaism and Christianity stigmatize gays and lesbians as sinners who live outside the norms of acceptable behavior. As Swigonski (2001) indicates, “Hebrew and Christian scriptures have been used to characterize LGBT persons as moral transgressors, as individuals who stand outside the cloak of protection of human rights, and to justify or rationalize hate crimes against them” (p. 34).

Because of this religious-associated homophobia, heterosexism, and homonegativity, many gay rights organizations and human rights advocates have condemned the providing of federal and state funds to religious institutions to provide social services on the basis of their potential to discriminate against gay and lesbian recipients secondary to their religious beliefs (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2002; Human Rights Campaign, 2003).

As introduced, this legislation which promotes privatization of social services from the public to sectarian spheres was designed to protect the integrity of religious organizations and their respective belief systems (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; Cahill & Jones, 2002). Because of this possible discriminatory loophole, the gay community and advocates for homosexuals have provided strong disapproval. Jean (2002) warned that Charitable Choice, as Bush and other proponents call it, would transfer \$80 billion in social services funding over the next decade to religious institutions and other potential faith-based providers that openly claim to be anti-gay. These organizations could legally refuse to hire or serve GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender) people. What is most unfortunate is that these organizations designated to help could actually refuse to hire people who are not of their religion, and thereby could engage in proselytizing vulnerable people that are in need of assistance. Jean warns that “This is un-American . . . and the most galling thing is that this would be done with our tax dollars. We’re being asked to fund our own oppression!” (p. iv).

While the privatization of social services from public to religious sectors has major detractors, support also widely exists. To provide a fair representation of both sides of this reform, there are numerous positive aspects of the privatization of social services from public to sectarian as cited by supporters of the practice. To accomplish this, mythology about the socioeconomic distinctions of homosexuals will be scrutinized, along with a comprehensive analysis of the major implications and negative consequences the privatization of social services from public to sectarian has on the gay and lesbian community.

### ***POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF THE PRIVATIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES FROM PUBLIC TO SECTARIAN***

The use of faith-based organizations for promotion of social welfare and to meet the needs of the poor is widely supported by members of both the Democratic and Republican parties (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; Glennon, 2000). In the 2000 presidential election, both Democratic Candidate Al Gore and Republican President George W. Bush lauded the devolution of the providing of social services from the public to religious sectors (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; Glennon, 2000).

But support for this initiative is more historic than just a few years. During the Reagan administration, religious organizations were hailed as more efficacious than public or secular, nonprofit social service providers (Cnaan & Bodie, 2002). President Reagan was an advocate for increasing the responsibility and accountability of the religious sphere in meeting the demands of the needy and consequently, lessening the burden of the government in providing such services (Denton, 1982).

As a supportive centerpiece, Reagan often cited the success story of a faith-based shelter in Washington DC with a 90% success rate in helping homeless people begin recovery from drug and alcohol abuse in comparison with a similar public program with an abysmal 10% success rate (Cnaan & Bodie, 2002).

Supporters of faith-based privatization initiatives often claim that religious organizations offer a more holistic approach to the providing of social services and reject a “one-size fits all” mentality (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; White House, 2001). Former President Clinton touted another positive aspect of religious involvement in social services, as he believed that as more religious organizations became involved in the providing of social services, other sectors of society would follow their lead and “the personal involvement with participants of

welfare programs would have a transforming effect” (Cnaan & Bodie, 2002, p. 228).

Gore (1999) was also a strong believer that faith-based organizations that provide social services do so much more holistically:

There is a reason faith-based approaches have shown special promise with challenges such as drug addiction, youth violence, and homelessness. Overcoming these problems takes something more than money or assistance—it requires an inner discipline and courage, deep within the individual. I believe that faith in itself is sometimes essential to spark a personal transformation—and to keep that person from falling back into addiction, delinquency, or dependency.

While empirical research data regarding the overall effects of the privatization of social services to religious organizations is scarce, some researchers have explored the implications of the practice. Bartkowski and Regis (1999) examined the impacts of religious organizations, anti-poverty relief, and Charitable Choice on welfare reform in Mississippi. In the 30 faith communities they found several “noteworthy” (p. 5) conclusions from their study, and although lengthy, below is the author’s summary of their findings:

First, religious communities currently offer many different types of aid to the needy, and pastors conceive of faith-based aid as a holistic form of relief that—unlike public assistance—aims to address both material and non-material needs among the disadvantaged. Second, taken together, local faith communities currently employ several different aid-provision strategies through which they offer social services to vulnerable populations:

- intensive and sustained interpersonal engagement with the poor;
- direct intermittent relief to the needy;
- collaboration with para-church relief organizations; and
- short-term mission trips to disadvantaged populations situated in distant locales.

Finally, although the preponderance of pastors in our sample is familiar with faith-based welfare reform initiatives, these religious leaders evince wide-ranging evaluations concerning the future

possibility of charitable choice implementation within their home congregations and local faith communities. (p. 5-6)

Faith-based organizations that provide social services also seem to be able to utilize volunteerism much more effectively than secular ones. Ebaugh, Pipes, Chafetz, and Daniels (2003), found in their study that in comparison to secular social service providers, faith-based organizations had a much higher number of volunteers working on their staffs (although managerial and clerical staff consistency were relatively equal).

Supporters of religious institutions and organizations as social service providers often claim that a distinctively religious approach to social services is one that is relational, morally compelling, and personable and it provides love, guidance, and friendship; while helping people “transform their lives” (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001, p. 662). These approaches to social services are also considered more natural for religious organizations compared to government agencies or secular service providers (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001).

While many individuals offer support and claim positive attributes toward the efforts of social service privatization to the sectarian realm, the gay and lesbian community collectively does not. Prior to examining the concerns and issues gays and lesbians possess regarding this reform tool, it is imperative to scrutinize public opinion regarding the socioeconomic difference of homosexuals and examine the data regarding the socioeconomic status of gays and lesbians as a minority group as well as the data regarding the composition of gays and lesbians who utilize social service delivery systems.

### ***EXAMINING SOCIOECONOMIC MYTHS OF HOMOSEXUALS AND UTILIZING THE SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEM***

Examination of popular cultural opinion of Americans regarding the socioeconomic status of gays and lesbians reveals many mythologies and misconceptions (Badgett, 1997; Vaid, 1998; Badgett, 2000; Anastas, 2001). The prevailing myth is that gay and lesbian people, especially gay men, are affluent and are faring well in the workplace. But in reality, research shows that homosexuals experience discrimination in wages and earning and lack many essential rights related to employment (Anastas, 2001; Morrow, 2001). Although data related to the socioeconomic status of gays and lesbians is somewhat scarce (Anastas,

2001; Klawitter, 1998), some research does exist. Badgett (2000), an economist, has completed an ample amount of research concerning the economic myths and realities of the gay and lesbian community collectively. Her data reveals that although many Americans believe gays and lesbians (and more specifically gay men) in general are more wealthy than their heterosexual counterparts, she and others believe this assumption is based on flawed marketing surveys which are non-representative of the gay and lesbian community (Anastas, 2001; Cahill & Jones, 2002). As Badgett (2000) states:

By contrasting such flawed surveys with emerging data from representative groups of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, we will begin to sketch a surprisingly complex economic portrait that undermines the common stereotype of gay Americans as some of the affluent elite. Among this report's finding is the actual diversity of economic life among this population and the reality that lesbians and gay men earn no more than heterosexual people; indeed, in some cases gay men appear to earn less than comparable heterosexual men. (p. 22)

Much of this flawed data has been used by conservatives to fight measures aimed at protecting gays and lesbians in the workplace, a practice that is prevalent throughout the country (Badgett, 1997; Klawitter & Flatt, 1998; Anastas, 2001; Human Rights Campaign, 2003). And while Badgett (2000) provides supportive data suggesting gay males appear to earn less than comparable heterosexual males, some researchers have found specific examples of such disparity in females as well. Because of overall wage discrimination females' experience, lesbian couples have an overall decreased combined income than heterosexuals (Anastas, 2001).

Klawitter and Flatt's (1998) study, which examined discriminatory influences and anti-discrimination legislation on the disparity between homosexual and heterosexual income, concluded that discrimination based on gender-based wage differentials can create differences between either same-sex or different-sex couples. In conclusion, research regarding the socioeconomic status of gays and lesbians as a minority suggests that working gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are similar to heterosexual people (Badgett, 2000; Anastas, 2001; Cahill & Jones, 2002).



While research in the area is limited, there are several unique reasons that separate out these individuals from heterosexuals, causing the members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community to suffer from significant economic hardship (Cahill & Jones, 2002). For example, many gay men who are infected with HIV depend on Medicaid, which is a subsidized health insurance program designed for low-income individuals (Cahill & Jones, 2002). In fact, in New York City, a majority of people (41,000) with HIV are gay or bisexual and contracted the virus from male-to-male sex (New York State Department of Health, 2002). Of the total state population with HIV, 65% rely on Medicaid to provide their care and 14.4% of total expenditures for this population went to social service providers (New York State Department of Health, 2002).

Homosexuals also face financial hardship in other matters. As Cahill and Jones (2002) point out, many GLBT youths are forced out of their homes once they *come out*. Being forced to live on the streets can force these individuals into dire economic insecurity. Other reasons for a disadvantaged status include the fact that older GLBT people are less likely to receive supplemental income for the wages of a partner, and are less likely to have health insurance or have prescription drug coverage. Partnered gay and lesbian elders earn less in retirement, as they are ineligible for Social Security survivor and spousal benefits, ineligible to be the beneficiary of their partner's pension under most pension plans, and have to pay taxes on any 401(k) distribution.

Cahill and Jones (2002) estimated 3-8% of the US population is homosexual or bisexual, and there were between 1 million and 3.6 million poor gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans in 1996, and between 900,000 and 2.5 million in 2000. This leaves a significant number of gays and lesbians living in economic hardship. Although data reflecting which particular social services gay and lesbian recipients utilize most is limited, what is known is that services utilized are clustered within particular geographic areas where gay communities are large and stable (Cahill & Jones, 2002). Besides HIV/AIDS care, Medicaid statistics show gays and lesbians also access social services like:

- Food and nutritional-related services
- Homeless shelters and housing assistance
- Substance abuse addiction services (for both homeless and non-homeless gays and lesbians)
- Health and preventative services

Obviously, utilization research is limited and the concerns gays and lesbians have regarding the privatization and contracting-out of social services to religious organizations need further exploration.

**NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE PRIVATIZATION  
OF SOCIAL SERVICES FROM PUBLIC TO SECTARIAN  
ON THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY**

While privatization of social services from public to sectarian has support in some political and religious arenas, the gay community has been widely critical of the movement (Yang, 2001; Cahill & Jones, 2002; Jean, 2002). In fact, some people believe discrimination issues related to placing this movement in the hands of religious-based organizations create an unprecedented threat to GLBT people and for the general public in need of social services (Cahill & Jones, 2002). Yang (2001) warns that being aware of the potential problems that could result, the Bush Administration is willing to allow this discrimination to subsist. For example, this is clearly outlined when the Bush administration signaled its commitment to allowing the Salvation Army and other faith-based groups that openly discriminate against gays to provide services for them. Since gays and lesbians are not a protected minority in federal legislation, discriminatory practices are not punishable by federal law and these organizations fall out of the protections of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Yang, 2001).

A review of the literature provides the prevailing concern that some religious entities that contract with government funding sources to provide social services will discriminate against gays and lesbians who are in need of social services and will also discriminate against gays and lesbians who apply for employment or currently work with the religious organization. This stems from changes PRWORA implemented in 1996 to policies pertaining to the allocation of funds to states for social service provided through welfare.

As illustrated previously, the provision of PRWORA (Section 104—Charitable Choice) that expands the accessibility and feasibility of religious institutions to public funding to provide social services was designed to ease barriers to government funding and increase and support the use of churches and religious congregations and organizations in providing such services (Davis, 1996; Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; Knippenberg, 2003).

To help stimulate religious organizations to compete for government funds for social service providers, Charitable Choice was written with specific stipulations ensuring that the religious integrity of the organization would go unharmed (Davis, 1996; Crosby, 2001; Cahill & Jones, 2002; Kennedy & Bielefeld, 2002; Knippenberg, 2003). As Crosby outlines:

Charitable choice requires the government to award contracts for certain social services to religious organizations on an equal basis as secular providers without impairing the religious character of the institution [42 U.S.C. Section 604a(b)]. The law provides safeguards whereas a religious group receiving public funds cannot be forced to alter its internal form of governance such as hiring people of different faiths, or removing religious art, icons, scripture, or other symbols from the places where clients are served [42 U.S.C. Section 604a(d)]. (Crosby, 2001)

Because of these stipulations, many researchers maintain that religious organizations that are contracted to provide social services are able to discriminate on the basis of religious belief. For example, Cahill and Jones (2002) maintain that because religious providers maintain their religious beliefs and practices when providing services, discrimination has resulted:

This [assurance of religious identity] has opened the door to discrimination on the basis of religious belief, gender, race, and ethnicity, sexuality, and other factors. (p. 50)

To answer concerns about possible discriminatory-related practices by religious social service providers, Charitable Choice does contain an alternative provision that requires federal, state, or local governments to ensure that alternative secular programs be available to serve clients who object to receiving services from a religious social service provider (Cahill & Jones, 2002; Glennon, 2000).

However, this amounts to nothing more than a mostly unknown and unfunded mandate that may be impossible to implement due to distance from such providers and time constraints of devising and organizing such alternatives (Davis, 1996; Cahill & Jones, 2002). In states where privatization of social services to religious institutions has been practiced, a lack of regulatory mechanisms has occurred (Crosby, 2001; Texas Freedom Network, 2003).

For example, in 1997, the state of Texas exempted religious drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs from licensing requirements (Crosby, 2001; Cahill & Jones, 2002). Counselors were exempted from hundreds of hours of training required by secular drug counselors while facilities were exempt from all state health and safety regulations (Rosin, 2000). And unlike their secular counterparts, counselors of religious-based programs are not subject to criminal background checks (Rosin, 2000). According to Crosby (2001) caution must be exercised when a publicly supported drug treatment program is run within a church setting. Oftentimes in this setting counselors are ministers and these professionals may not have training in the treatment of substance abuse or addiction medicine. There needs to be no confusion that drug abuse is seen as a disease, rather than a sin. If it is viewed as a sin, the outcome for state-supported therapy could be prayer and Bible reading. The belief that drug abuse is a sinful lifestyle choice sets back efforts by the National Association of Drug and Alcohol Counselors (NADAC). As Bill McColl of NADAC warns, efforts can be lost that combat the stigma that substance abuse, delinquency and mental health are a symptom of a breakdown of morality. "This [charitable choice] would roll us back 60 years, right back to when people thought you were an alcoholic merely because you didn't accept Jesus as your personal savior" (Cahill & Jones, 2002, p. 59).

This is of particular salience to gay males in need of substance abuse treatment interventions. Recent research has suggested that substance abuse is rampant among gay males between the ages of 15-22; young gay men are much more likely than their heterosexual cohorts to use drugs including marijuana, cocaine, and amphetamines (Dottinga, 2003).

Because of these aspects, the privatization of social services from public providers to sectarian providers could have highly detrimental effects on gays and lesbians in need of such services. Much of the body of knowledge in the social sciences pertaining to gays and lesbians needs to be expanded; likewise, research examining the direct impacts this privatization effort has had and will continue to have on homosexual recipients of social services needs to be increased.

Contracting to religious social service providers has caused another problem for homosexuals. Gays and lesbians working in such religious agencies have encountered discrimination based on their sexual orientation (Cahill & Jones, 2002; Rostow, 2003). Even in states, counties, and cities with anti-discrimination laws protecting gays and lesbians in the workplace, federal policy circumvents these protective measures (Cahill & Jones, 2002).

Although failed, the Salvation Army has attempted to gain White House support to exempt the organization from state and local anti-discrimination laws protecting homosexuals (Yang, 2002; Cahill & Jones, 2002). As Yang (2001) reported, excerpts of an internal Salvation Army document published by *The Washington Post* said the White House had committed to change the circular in order to shield religious groups from state and local laws prohibiting anti-gay hiring practices (Yang, 2001).

In addition, Federal courts upheld the employment termination of lesbian Alicia Pedreira, a therapist supervisor employed by the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, an organization that receives \$13 million of its \$19 million budget from state and federal funds (Cahill & Jones, 2002). A picture of Pedreira and her partner entered for a Kentucky State Fair contest was seen by coworkers and reported to administrators of the agency, who terminated Pedreira on grounds of Baptist religious conflict with her sexual orientation (Williams, 1998; Pedreira, 2002). As Cahill and Jones (2002) conclude:

A case litigated by the American Civil Liberties Union's Gay and Lesbian Rights Project alleging religious discrimination (since sexual orientation is not protected by federal law) failed in federal court. (p. 53)

Pedreira's incident isn't isolated. Litigation involving the United Methodist Children's Home in Decatur, Georgia was recently settled. Aimee Bellmore was fired from her position as youth counselor, despite extraordinary performance evaluations, when the home discovered she was gay. A second plaintiff, psychotherapist Alan Yorker, was informed during the interview process that the home does not hire Jews (Rostow, 2003).

Under terms of the settlement, the United Methodist Children's Home will abide by anti-discrimination rules while the state of Georgia will no longer provide funding to religious groups with discriminatory policies. Because sexual orientation is not protected under state or federal laws, to what extent the deal will prevent maltreatment of gay and lesbian employees is unknown (Rostow, 2003).

The announcement of this settlement came at the conclusion of a three-year research project (known as the Charitable Choice Research Project) undertaken by the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund subsidized by an endowment from the Ford Foundation. During an interview with journalist Ann Rostow, Susan Sommer, a spokesperson from the organization, called the settlement a "significant breakthrough

in the national debate over whether more taxpayer money should be given to religious organizations. There can't be a sign on the door of a government-funded social services provider saying "Taxpayer-funded positions: Jews and Catholics need not apply" (Rostow, 2003).

In summary, privatization efforts that move government-provided social services to religious organizations have had and will continue to have negative impacts on America's gays and lesbians. This study has found major flaws in this reform tool as it relates to equality in providing social services. In addition, many concerns and examples of discriminatory workplace practices by religious social service providers were found in the literature review performed by this author.

While much unenthusiastic data depict this privatization effort as harmful to gays and lesbians, it is clear that more research on the subject is needed. While examples of discrimination and inequity are bountiful, the direct negative discriminatory effects of certain social services and specific religious social service providers are an area in desperate need of research intensification and expansion.

### ***CONCLUSION***

This article explores the multifaceted and versatile issue of the privatization of social services from public to sectarian. A legislative background of the policies (most precisely, Charitable Choice) resulting in increased funding and support for religious competition in contract bidding for social services was explored. In addition, exact social services religious organizations are able to provide were listed.

Many positive aspects and political supporters of the movement were identified including the belief that religious service providers are more holistic in their approach to care, are more relational, morally compelling, and personable (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999; White House, 2001). In addition, religious providers are able to execute volunteerism more effectively (Ebaugh et al., 2003), utilize multiple strategic approaches to providing services (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999), and according to some public service officials, help promote charitable contributions by the greater part of American society (Cnaan & Bodie, 2002).

This article also examined the socioeconomic myths and realities of gay men and lesbians. Research has dispelled the popular belief that gay men and lesbians are much more affluent than heterosexuals (Badgett, 2000). Counter to that are findings which indicate that, in fact, homo-

sexuals do face discrimination and disparity in earnings and are denied equal access in the workplace (Anastas, 2001; Morrow, 2001).

In closing, this article examined the potential positive and negative impacts the privatization of social services from public to sectarian spheres has had on America's gays and lesbians. Along with specific examples and cases, data were presented that could lead to this reform tool having drastic discriminatory affects on both gays and lesbians who receive social services or who are employed by religious organizations that provide services with government funds. Further research is needed on the direct negative effects gays and lesbians experience as a result of specific religious service providers. In addition, there is a need to increase the amount of research data reflecting which social services are most likely to be accompanied by discriminatory practices.

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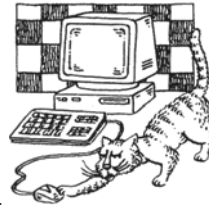
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