

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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Gay rights and employee benefits

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Gay activist groups targeted Wal-Mart claiming they are discriminatory concerning gay workers' benefits. As a result, they gave Wal-Mart a "do not buy" rating. The specific complaint is Wal-Mart continues to refuse to grant benefits to the partners of cohabitating gay workers, unless their store is in one of the few states that legally recognize domestic partners thereby requiring Wal-Mart to extend those benefits. Is Wal-Mart's decision unreasonable? Alternatively, might it be commendable a company the size of Wal-Mart is willing to challenge a self-proclaimed special interest group rather than compromise their values as other companies have done? A gay rights group claims, "Wal-Mart is moving in reverse on equal treatment of their employees." Is that true, or is Wal-Mart treating their employees fairly and equally, regardless of lifestyle preferences? All unmarried employees, either heterosexual or homosexual, who are cohabitating are considered single and all single employees are treated the same. Wal-Mart simply refuses to accept the concept that cohabitating gay partners are the same as a heterosexual husband and wife. Is Wal-Mart narrow-minded or prejudice? Those of us who disagree with homosexual behavior are neither of these. We simply continue to accept that marriage is between a man and a woman; it is not cohabitating homosexual or heterosexual partners. Too often the homosexual community claims those of us who dare to disagree with their choices are intolerant, bigoted, discriminatory, homophobic, and the like. This tactic is best described by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a fellow poet and friend of William Wordsworth, "I have seen great intolerance shown in support of tolerance." Could it actually be the homosexual community demonstrating intolerance of anyone who has the courage to disagree with them? When

an individual or group responds with personal attacks directed at those who disagree with them aren't they actually demonstrating serious reservations about the correctness of their beliefs?

The assertion of the gay community, if I understand it correctly, is people are born homosexual and therefore have no choice but to live a gay lifestyle. The logic is if they did not choose to be homosexual then their behavior must be appropriate. The 'if and then' of this unpersuasive argument does not follow. The claim is flawed. Are we required to succumb to whatever genetic behavioral trait we may possess? To the contrary, a critical distinguishing feature of human beings is our ability to choose and control our behavior rather than simply following our genetic instincts.

Alcoholics and drug addicts face extreme difficulties because of their genetics. They are born with the genetics for alcoholism and/or drug addiction. They did not choose to have an addiction. More importantly, drug and/or alcohol recovery programs do not advocate the use of drugs and alcohol with the reasoning that "they are born that way, they have no choice". To the contrary, they address the reality that the drug addict and/or alcoholic has the free choice to drink or use drugs, the free choice whether to give in to their genetics or not. Further, they hold it is the alcoholic's or drug addict's responsibility to make the decision to not use alcohol or drugs!

Is homosexuality really any different? Individuals who are homosexual have the same free choice alcoholics and drug addicts have, the same free choice we all have. They have control over their actions, their choices, their behaviors. Has our society deteriorated to the point that any behavior is acceptable if a genetic component can be asserted? Pedophilia, serial killing, and infidelity may have

genetic components. Are we to abandon any standards, allowing any behavior one chooses, one claims is genetic? Are we unwilling to claim any control over our behavior?

Furthermore, if a company succumbs to treating a gay couple as if they were a heterosexual married couple, wouldn't it be discriminatory to not treat unmarried heterosexual couples in the same manner? The benefits they are demanding are among the most expensive for an employer and are reflected in the pricing of a company's products. Is it reasonable to expect consumers to financially subsidize the gay lifestyle, to redefine marriage? Individuals who are homosexual have the right to live as they choose, but do they have the right to demand the rest of us condone, legitimize, and subsidize their choices? They were not forced to live outside accepted standards, they chose to do so. Should society be expected to pay for whatever lifestyle someone chooses?

I would defend someone's right to choose to live a homosexual lifestyle. However, defending their right to live that way is not an endorsement of the lifestyle. Nor does it suggest, in any way, those individuals should have any privileges or rights beyond those of any other single person. They should not be treated as a minority group needing special protections. Lastly, it is not an endorsement that homosexual couples should have the rights and privileges of heterosexual married couples or be recognized as married.

They may have been born that way, but they do have a choice how they live!

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