"This employee is being terminated due to violation of company policy. The employee is gay."
HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FUND

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The Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), the largest national lesbian and gay political organization, works to end discrimination, secure equal rights, and protect the health and safety of all Americans. With a national staff, and volunteers and members throughout the country, HRCF lobbies the federal government on lesbian, gay, and AIDS issues; educates the general public; participates in election campaigns; organizes volunteers; and provides expertise and training at the state and local level.

This publication is dedicated to the courageous people who have shared their personal, often painful, experiences of discrimination in order to educate the public about this pervasive but little understood problem. Our hope is that, upon hearing these stories of injustice and hardship, fair-minded people will be moved to ensure that people are judged in the workplace solely on their performance and abilities.

Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Problem ... Discrimination ............................................. page 3

The Mid-Atlantic ............................................................... page 5
  Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland,
  New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia

The Midwest ................................................................. page 11
  Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan,
  Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota
  Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin

New England ............................................................... page 17
  Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts,
  New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont

The South ................................................................. page 21
  Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia,
  Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina
  South Carolina and Tennessee

The Southwest ............................................................ page 29
  Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah

The West ................................................................. page 34
  Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana,
  Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming

The Solution ... Fairness ................................................ page 41
Anti-Gay Job Discrimination is Widespread — and Legal
A fundamental American value holds that people who do their jobs, pay their taxes and contribute to their communities should not be singled out for unfair discrimination. Unfortunately, federal law does not extend this basic fairness to the untold millions of Americans who happen to be lesbian or gay. Lesbian and gay people are fired from their jobs, refused work, paid less and otherwise discriminated against in the workplace — with no basic protection under federal law.

A federal court ruled in the case of a Detroit postal worker who was harassed and beaten at work that, although he had clearly suffered discrimination because he was gay, "homosexuality is not an impermissible criteria on which to discriminate" under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. "These actions, although cruel, are not made illegal by Title VII," the judge wrote. [Dillon v. Frank, 1992 U.S. App. LEXIS 766 (6th Cir. 1992).] Since federal civil rights laws do not cover this kind of discrimination, gay and lesbian people lack the most basic rights that should belong to all Americans.

Discrimination Happens Everywhere
The lack of basic protections leaves millions of hardworking, taxpaying people vulnerable to unfair treatment. This report documents just a few examples of the discrimination faced by lesbian and gay — and heterosexual — people in every region of the country.

Most Americans Support Fairness
Most Americans believe this type of discrimination is wrong. National polls have consistently found that more than three-fourths of voters oppose anti-gay job discrimination and support equal rights in the workplace for lesbian and gay Americans. Unfortunately, seven out of 10 people polled do not know that their gay and lesbian family, friends, neighbors and coworkers lack the most basic rights under the law.

By publishing stories of hardworking men and women who have been treated unfairly in the workplace, we hope to create a broader understanding of the impact that discrimination has on the lives of real people. The cases documented here represent only a fraction of the uncounted people whose stories may never be told. Because of widespread discrimination and the lack of legal protections, many people find it impossible to discuss their experiences openly.