



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###





## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###





## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###





## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###





## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###



## **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 22, 2010

**CONTACT:**

Amy Cannata, ACLU of Montana Communications Director  
(406) 459-1114  
[amyc@aclumontana.org](mailto:amyc@aclumontana.org)

Robyn Shepherd, ACLU Media Relations Associate  
(212) 519-7829  
[media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

# **Montana Same-Sex Couples Sue State For Legal Protections For Their Families**

## **Seven Couples Seek Equal Protection Mandated Under Montana's Constitution**

HELENA, MT — Seven committed same-sex couples today filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana for failing to provide legal protections to same-sex couples and their families in violation of the Montana Constitution's rights of privacy, dignity and the pursuit of life's basic necessities and its guarantees of equal protection and due process. The goal of this lawsuit is ensure that same-sex couples are able to protect their families with the same kind of legal protections that opposite-sex couples are offered through marriage.

Because there is a constitutional amendment in Montana barring marriage for same-sex couples, the couples in the lawsuit are seeking the protection of state-recognized domestic partnerships, similar to those in place in several other states.

"Mary Anne and I are part of a family unit, bonded by love and mutual respect and a desire to share in a close relationship that benefits not only us, as partners, but our wider family and the entire community," said Jan Donaldson, a Helena nurse, of her 27-year relationship with her partner, pediatric neurologist Mary Anne Guggenheim. "We depend on one another, in all aspects of our life together. We want to be able to do that with grace and dignity and to feel secure that our relationship will be respected. We want our relationship to be recognized for what it clearly is – a loving commitment of responsibility worthy of security and protection by the state."

Montana law automatically grants married opposite-sex couples safeguards upon which they can depend in times of need. But, under Montana law, it is possible for same-sex couples to be barred from visiting their partners in the hospital and to be left out of conversations about emergency medical care. Montana inheritance laws refuse to recognize same-sex couples, and can leave surviving partners with nothing if their partners die without valid wills. Today's lawsuit seeks a mechanism such as the domestic partnership laws adopted by several other states to provide similar protections for committed same-sex couples.

"It's unfair for same-sex couples who have made commitments and formed families to be treated by the state like legal strangers," said Betsy Griffing, Legal Director for the ACLU of Montana. "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Montanans

are valuable and productive members of society who should be treated fairly if their partner is in the hospital or dies without a will.”

“Denise has stood with me through 56 brain surgeries and over 300 spinal taps, yet to Montana we're nothing more than strangers. Knowing we have legal protections for our family sure would make it easier on both of us the next time I have a medical crisis,” said Kellie Gibson of Laurel, who is raising two children with her partner Denise Boettcher.

Plaintiffs in the case *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. State of Montana* are Mary Anne Guggenheim and Jan Donaldson of Helena, Stacey Haugland and Mary Leslie of Bozeman, Mike Long and Rich Parker of Bozeman, MJ Williams and Nancy Owens of Basin, Rick Wagner and Gary Stallings of Butte, Denise Boettcher and Kellie Gibson of Laurel, and Casey Charles and David Wilson of Missoula.

In addition to Griffing, the couples are represented by Elizabeth Gill, a staff attorney with the ACLU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project; James Goetz and Ben Alke of the Bozeman, MT, law firm Goetz, Gallik & Baldwin P.C.; and Ruth Borenstein, Philip Besirof and Neil Perry of the California law firm Morrison & Foerster LLP.

Additional information about the case, biographies of the plaintiffs and links to videos of the plaintiffs can be found at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org) and [www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships](http://www.aclu.org/mtpartnerships).

###