

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 4:31 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Clinton - same sex

See below

From: Slaughter, Anne-Marie
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Fri Jun 19 03:27:16 2009
Subject: Fw: Clinton - same sex

I'm sure S has seen this, but in case she hasn't, it shd be good medicine. It could not b more positive.

From: Labott, Elise [REDACTED]
To: Slaughter, Anne-Marie
Sent: Thu Jun 18 22:27:46 2009
Subject: Clinton - same sex

B6

Clinton blazes trail on same sex benefits <<http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2009/06/18/clinton-blazes-trail-on-same-sex-benefits/>>

Posted: 07:18 PM ET

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Elise Labott
 CNN State Department Producer

Yesterday's groundbreaking move by President Obama to provide some benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees came to fruition in large part due to Secretary of Clinton, who first put the issue on the table.

It is unclear whether the Obama administration came to office planning to offer government-wide benefits to domestic partners of civil service employees, but Clinton, a longtime advocate of gay rights, was on it day one. Since President Obama named her as his pick for Secretary of State in November, Clinton's transition staff and the State Department had been working with members of the American Foreign Service Association and the group GLIFAA (Gays & Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies) on what could be done to extend benefits to domestic partners of diplomats serving abroad.

At her very first senior staff meeting Clinton instructed the State Department to review whether she had the authority to extend benefits to same-sex domestic partners. About a week later a gay employee asked Clinton during a town hall with employees to eliminate discrimination against same sex partners. The Secretary of State drew loud applause when she said the issue was "of real concern" to her, and that she was already working on it.

Several weeks ago, a memo to employees from Clinton instituting the changes was leaked to the press. Clinton's aides at the time said the memo was a draft, and that Clinton couldn't change policies without an "interagency review" of the issue to make sure State Department actions wouldn't negatively affect other agencies. But the memo seemed to light a fire under the administration, which quickly caught up to Clinton's lead.

Still, the health benefits announced Wednesday for same sex partners of non-State Department civil employees is a drop in the bucket compared to the long list of other benefits the State Department extended to the gay partners of US diplomats serving abroad. In addition to health benefits and access to medical and emergency evacuation, domestic partners will also get diplomatic passports, training at the Foreign Service Institute and housing allowances. Same sex partners will get the same preference for US embassy jobs that spouses currently enjoy, and the State Department will now work with foreign governments to provide same-sex domestic partners, to the extent possible, with diplomatic visas, work permits and other privileges, including diplomatic immunity. The State Department will even pay for them to fly home if a relative is gravely ill. Few of these benefits are currently offered to domestic partners.

Although the Foreign Service has difference rules and regulations which allow the State Department to do more in the first place, Clinton extended the full range of legally available benefits and allowances to same sex partners of members of the Foreign Service. In a statement issued Thursday acknowledging the support partners provide to overseas posts, Clinton said, "domestic partners of federal employees have for too long been treated unequally."

Clinton knows the move is also good business. Today's US diplomats serving around the world are increasingly having to shed their pinstripe suits and get dirty in the field, which requires a whole different skill set. These days the State Department is competing for the same Arabic and Farsi speakers and technology gurus as top notch multinational companies, where domestic partner benefits and allowances are increasingly the norm. Clinton herself noted if the State Department wants to remain a "word class employer" which attracts and retains high caliber personnel, the change is "the smart thing to do."

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