

The Clerk to the Committee
Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments
C/o House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

19 May 2003

Dear Madam/Sir,

RE: Draft Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (EE(SO)R)

Rights of Women ask the Joint Committee to enquire whether:

- a) the text of EE(SO)R meets the requirements of the EU directive 2000/78/E of 27 December 2000
- b) EE(SO)R complies with the Human Rights Act 1998.

We believe that Regulation 7 (3) in particular does neither. We fully support the arguments made in submissions to the Joint Committee by the organisations Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights, and the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement on these points.

We accept that it is not within the Joint Committee's terms of reference to examine the policy illustrated in the draft regulations. We believe that not only does this exemption conflict with both the Directive and the Human Rights Act, but that it is an homophobic measure which will breach the rights of men and women throughout the United Kingdom should it be allowed to come into force.

Background: Rights of Women

Rights of Women is an industrial and provident society, which was founded in 1975 to promote the interests of women in relation to the law. We run a free, national confidential telephone legal advice help line for women. We specialise in advising in family law, especially domestic violence and Children Act matters. Rights of Women works to attain justice and equality by informing, educating and empowering women on their legal rights. We are a membership organisation and our activities include producing publications, organising conferences and training courses, and doing policy and research work.

Yours sincerely,

Ranjit Kaur
Director