



*This material is made available under the terms of the
Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 3.0 License.*

Second parent adoption in Michigan: It's time to protect all our families

Christine Sauv , *MSW Candidate*

Christine Sauv  is a MSW candidate at the University of Michigan with a concentration in Community Organization with Community and Social Systems. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences and French & Francophone Studies from the University of Michigan Residential College. Before entering the MSW program, she served in the Peace Corps as a Health and Environmental Education volunteer in the countries of Mauritania and Senegal. Her current research interests include policy advocacy and organizing around the issues of immigration, HIV/AIDS, and LGBT rights.

Abstract

Second parent adoption can offer children the security of having two legally recognized parents. Current Michigan law does not provide for second parent adoption, denying full parental rights to partners of custodial parents who may function in all senses as second parents. This article looks at recently proposed second parent adoption legislation in the state of Michigan. The policy change would guarantee protections such as health insurance, Social Security benefits, and child support for all children of unmarried parents, regardless of the parents' sexual orientation. In addition, the measure could result in economic savings to the state and an increase in the pool of adoptive parents. Opponents of the measure are concerned it will undermine the sanctity of marriage, redefine the family, and dictate how faith-based groups grant adoptions. Some critics also claim it promotes homosexuality and argue that same-sex couples are inappropriate parents. Supporters, however, provide a wealth of evidence to the contrary and affirm the need for second parent adoption in Michigan. Second parent adoption would recognize the existing diversity of Michigan families and provide equal protection under the law for all families.

Introduction

Changing definitions of family, an increase in divorce rates, and the rise of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender-headed households has led to a need for innovative policies to protect the best interests of children. Just as stepparent adoptions have provided a recent solution for remarried couples, second parent adoption offers the legal status necessary for children to benefit from the stability of having two legally recognized parents. Current Michigan law only allows for adoption by one member of an unmarried couple, and only offers legal recognition to one parent of a same-sex couple. Partners of custodial parents who function in all senses as a second parent deserve to be granted full legal parental rights and responsibilities, including visitation and custody in the case of divorce, guardianship in the case of death or incapacitation, and the ability to make medical and education related decisions. Likewise, children deserve the right to maintain relationships with both parents. Second parent adoption would also grant children access to important protections such as health insurance, Social Security survivor benefits, and child support. The proposed second parent adoption legislation examined here would guarantee these protections for all children of unmarried parents in the state of Michigan.

The proposed policy would apply to 783,152 children currently living in unmarried households, including 7,800 children of same-sex couples (U.S. Census, 2011; Romero et al., 2007). In addition to providing essential securities to children and rights to parents, the measure may also provide additional benefits in the form of economic savings to the state and an increase in the potential pool of adoptive parents. Opponents of the measure are concerned it will undermine the sanctity of marriage, redefine the family, and dictate how faith-based groups grant adoptions. Some critics also claim it promotes homosexuality and argue that same-sex couples are inappropriate parents. Yet supporters provide a wealth of evidence to the contrary and affirm the need for second parent adoption in Michigan.

Background

The ever-evolving definition of family in our society can pose significant challenges for policy efforts that must remain responsive to changing conditions and needs. For example, formal adoption in America is a relatively recent practice that only gained popularity in the twentieth century (Herman, 2007). Whereas “stranger” adoptions have predominated over time, today a majority of children are adopted by relatives and step-parents, a development that reflects changing family structures and the rise of divorce, remarriage, and long-term cohabitation (Herman, 2007). Similarly, over the past few decades there has been an increase in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) family formations. LGBT individuals pursue various paths to parenthood: some have children from previous opposite-sex relationships, some adopt or become foster parents, and some have biological children through the aid of insemination or surrogacy. The changing configurations of America’s families present new questions for how to best ensure the security of children being raised in these households.

In the case of divorced heterosexual couples, one solution for protecting children’s best interests has been the introduction of “stepparent adoption.” Typically adoption requires the termination of both parents’ legal rights and the child becomes a ward of the state until the adoption order is complete. Therefore, if a custodial parent’s new spouse wishes to adopt a stepchild, this action would sever both the non-custodial and custodial parents’ rights. In recognition of the changing times, many states have modified their adoption codes in recent years to allow for stepparent adoptions; Michigan law was amended in 1995 (Probate Code of 1939, 2004). Under the revised statute, the spouse of a parent with legal custody may petition to adopt a stepchild after the rights of the non-custodial parent have been terminated: either by consenting to the adoption and relinquishing all parental rights, or by court order in the case of significant failure to perform his or her parental responsibilities. During this process the custodial parent does not lose parental rights when the spouse petitions to adopt, and the child does not become a ward of the state.

To ensure the security of children of LGBT parents, some states have introduced the option of “second parent adoption.” Similar to step-parent adoptions, second parent adoptions allow the

same-sex partner of an adoptive or biological parent to adopt without terminating the existing parent's rights (U.S. D.H.H.S., 2010). Currently sixteen states allow second parent adoption, either by a state statute or through a precedent setting interpretation of state law by an appeals court. Proposals to allow second parent adoption in the state of Michigan have been introduced in the legislature three times (2005, 2007, 2009), but legislation has not yet been enacted (Stutzky, 2009). Second parent adoption bills have recently been reintroduced in the Michigan House and Senate a fourth time and as of this writing are currently in committee (H.B. 4249 of 2011, S.B. 0167 of 2011).

The legal mandate of a state statute is desperately needed to provide the children of LGBT parents the same level of security that is afforded to children of opposite-sex couples. Children of heterosexual parents, whether married or unmarried, are granted the protection of having two legal parents from birth. For LGBT parents, however, current state law only recognizes the biological or adoptive parent as having full parental rights. In the case of adoption, Michigan statute allows for adoption by a single LGBT person, but not a same-sex couple (Probate Code of 1939, 2004). This means that although the biological or adoptive parent's partner may function as a second parent in every sense, he or she has no legal rights with respect to the child.

Second parent adoption statutes grant many essential securities for both child and parent. The policy statement issued in support of second parent adoption by the American Academy of Pediatrics (2002) highlights the important psychological and legal benefits provided by legal sanction: "(1) Protects the child's legal right to maintain relationships with both parents and also guarantees protection of the second parent's custody rights and responsibilities if the first parent were to die or become incapacitated. Without the legal protection of second parent status, family members of the legal parent could challenge the second parent's rights to continue raising the child, in effect causing the child to lose both parents. (2) If the couple separates, it protects the second parent's rights to custody and visitation and the child's right to maintain relationships with both parents. This has been shown to be an important factor in achieving a positive outcome for children in the separation or divorce of heterosexual parents. (3) Requires child support payment from both parents if the couple

separates. (4) Guarantees the child's eligibility for health benefits from both parents. (5) Legally allows either parent to provide consent for medical care and to make important education and health care related decisions for the child. (6) Ensures the child is eligible to receive all appropriate entitlements, such as Social Security survivor benefits, in the event of either parent's death" (AAP, 2002, p.339).

Considering the impact of the aforementioned protections on the security and well-being of children in LGBT families, there is a critical need for the provision of second parent adoption. The current Michigan adoption code states: "If a person desires to adopt a child ... that person, together with his wife or her husband, if married, shall file a petition with the court of the county" (Probate Code of 1939, 2004). This has been interpreted as allowing either a single person or a married heterosexual couple to adopt a child. Because the language does not specifically prohibit two single persons from adopting a child together, several Michigan courts have granted second parent adoptions. One notable case permitted two nuns to jointly adopt a special needs child (Stutzky, 2009). However, second parent adoption petitions came to a halt in 2002 when a Michigan Supreme Court justice urged Washtenaw County Circuit Court officials to cease approving second parent adoption petitions (Heywood, 2011). Subsequently, in 2004, the state attorney general issued an opinion stating that same-sex couples who had legally married in another jurisdiction could not jointly adopt a child in Michigan (Stutzky, 2009). These actions have produced statewide confusion and as a result, no new petitions have been filed. Clarification of Michigan law is required so that there is no question as to the legal standing of adoptions by two unmarried persons (CARE, 2009).

Policy Recommendation

All children, whether their parents are of the same or opposite sex, deserve the stability afforded by legal recognition of their relationships with both parents. For this reason, it is recommended that the state of Michigan enact legislation to permit second parent adoptions. The current proposed legislation, House Bill 4249 and Senate Bill 167 sponsored by Representative Irwin and Senator Warren, would amend Michigan adoption laws (MCL 710.24,

710.41, and 710.51) to clarify that “two unmarried persons may petition to adopt a child” (H.B. 4249, 2011; S.B. 0167, 2011). The bills would also extend the current state provision for stepparent adoptions to the unmarried partner of the legal parent: “If a parent having legal custody of the child is married to the petitioner for adoption or has joined in an adoption petition with another person...the judge shall not enter an order terminating the rights of that parent” (H.B. 4249, 2011). Finally, in cases involving parents who are divorced or were never married, the bill would allow the custodial parent to join in a petition for adoption with a person to whom he or she is not married, as well as permit the termination of parental rights of the noncustodial parent under certain circumstances (e.g. failing to provide regular and substantial support and contact with the child) (Stutzky, 2009).

Impact

If enacted, such a policy would affect the children of both unmarried heterosexual parents and LGBT parents. According to recent data from the American Community Survey, 32% of children in Michigan are living in unmarried households and the proposed legislation therefore could impact 783,152 children (U.S. Census, 2011). Some of these children may be able to benefit from the additional security provided by having two legal parents if a partner, relative, or friend of the unmarried parent were able to adopt the child as a second parent. While it is unknown how many unmarried parents would petition for a second parent adoption, it is likely that a large number of same-sex couples with children would seek this legal protection. According to a UCLA study, there are an estimated 7,800 children living in households headed by same-sex couples in the state of Michigan (Romero et al., 2007). Some of these children may already have a second legal parent from a previous opposite-sex relationship, but whether or not this parent is still involved in the child’s life may lead to a request for a second parent adoption. For those children who were born from insemination, surrogacy, or were adopted, these children may functionally have two parents but, unlike the children born of heterosexual parents (whether married or not), they are only afforded the legal protections of one parent. Currently there are at least 959 adopted children living in gay or

lesbian households in the state of Michigan who could potentially benefit from second parent adoption legislation (Gates et al., 2007).

The proposed legislation could also have an impact on the state's population of children in foster care. Each year roughly 2,700 children are adopted from the Michigan foster care system (State of Michigan DHS [MIDHS], 2007). According to recent reports from the Michigan Department of Human Services (2009a), unmarried parents make up 38% of these adoptive families. Again, many of these unmarried individuals may have partners or relatives serving as second parents who would benefit from legal recognition by the state.

Summary of Arguments

Legalizing second parent adoptions would better serve Michigan children by ensuring their right to the health insurance, pension, and Social Security survivor benefits of either parent. Allowing children to access the health benefits of both parents may also reduce unnecessary dependence on state funded programs such as Medicaid and provide savings to the taxpayer (CARE, 2007). A second parent adoption statute could also protect the continuity of care if a parent were to become disabled or unemployed, or in the case of death or incapacitation (Stutzky, 2009). Representative Paul Condino, as an attorney and the sponsor of the 2005 and 2007 bills, has provided pro-bono services to hospice organizations and described the difficulty terminally ill patients faced in having to relinquish their parental rights in order for an unmarried partner to adopt their children (Kozlowski, 2007). In this scenario, the proposed policy would also prevent the child from becoming a ward of the state or subjected to a custody battle when the designated parent could instead be assisting the child in the grieving process.

Additionally, should the relationship between two unmarried persons end, the child's relationship with both parents would be protected, along with the right to financial support from both parents. Both parents would have the legal authority to make medical and school-related decisions. The sharing of parental rights and responsibilities can reduce confusion for the child (i.e. wondering why only one parent can pick him up from school if he is sick) and lessen the burden placed on the legal parent (Stutzky,

2009). Custody could be shared by both parents rather than awarded by default to the one legal parent.

By allowing more categories of families to adopt, the pool of adoptive parents may also be increased. Many unmarried couples interested in adoption may have reservations due to concerns about the security of the family they would form. Allowing them to jointly adopt may attract more adoptive parents. Out of about 4,500 children in foster care eligible for adoption each year, on average only 2,700 are adopted (MIDHS, 2007). An increase in adoption rates would also be a tremendous savings to the state. The state foster care program would have fewer administrative costs and by some estimates, if a child were adopted at age 7, by age 18 taxpayers would have saved more than \$40,000 (Stutzky, 2009). In addition, because many same-sex couples have considered moving out of the state in order to adopt, some suggest that allowing second parent adoptions would encourage people to move to Michigan, resulting in additional economic benefits to the state (Costello, 2008).

Despite the potential benefits of the proposed legislation, opponents are concerned that such a policy would undermine the sanctity of marriage (Ashenfelter, 2010). While critics fear that granting second parent adoptions will diminish the institution of marriage by legitimizing gay and lesbian unions, the intent of the law would be to clarify and recognize the relationship between parent and child, and would not address or recognize the relationship between the adoptive parents. Supporters emphasize that the policy would not violate the state constitutional amendment affirming marriage as between one man and one woman. Instead, it would clarify that two unmarried persons may jointly adopt.

Opponents also contend that state policy has traditionally sought to preserve married families and discourage unmarried family units (Stutzky, 2009). The Michigan Catholic Conference has issued a statement maintaining that public policy regarding adoption must be crafted within the framework of marriage and the traditional family structure, and that the presence of a married mother and father is the optimal setting for the education and growth of children (Maluchnik, 2007). Similarly, testimony provided by the Michigan Family Forum asserts that scientific evidence has shown that children are better off when they are raised by their married biological parents (Stutzky, 2009). These concerns,

however, ignore the successful history of adoption in our country and the fact that public policy has always allowed single persons to adopt (Herman, 2007). According to many state and national child and social service organizations, “research is clear that children whose parents have had their rights terminated do better when placed in a loving family” (Stutzky, 2009, p.5). Considering that single persons are legally eligible to adopt, it should follow that two unmarried persons be eligible as well. One child welfare worker noted the discrepancy in allowing unmarried couples to serve as foster parents but not to adopt together: “They have these kids for three or four years. Then we have to tell them ‘Only one of you can adopt.’ It’s ridiculous. How can you be good enough to be foster parents but only one of you can adopt?” (Kozlowski, 2007, p.2).

In addition to undermining the sanctity of marriage, religious institutions are also concerned that second parent adoption legislation would allow the state to dictate how faith-based groups handle adoption services. With regard to the second parent adoption bill proposed in the 2009-2010 legislative session, the Michigan Catholic Conference supported an amendment sponsored by Representative Tonya Schuitmaker that would have provided an exemption for faith-based adoption agencies (Maluchnik, 2007). However, the amendment lacked sufficient support from members of the committee and failed along party lines. Current and future legislators may need to revisit this question. Historically, there has been disagreement over the need to protect individuals from discrimination and the desire to preserve the autonomy of faith-based organizations. Legislation has been proposed in the past to allow faith-based adoption agencies to discriminate against certain applicants based on religious or moral convictions. In 2006, Representative Stahl sponsored a bill that would have amended the Michigan adoption code to specify that adoption agencies are “not required to perform, assist, counsel, recommend, facilitate, refer, or participate in a placement that violates the child placing agency’s written religious or moral convictions or policies” (H.B. 5908, 2006). Although the bill ultimately was not enacted (it passed in the House but did not come up for a vote in the Senate), the attempt highlights a lingering point of contention among lawmakers.

Still others express concern that a second parent adoption statute could redefine notions of the family by recognizing “parents” in situations in which they have not previously been recognized.

For example, the law could recognize two old friends who combine households and parenting responsibilities as a “family.” However, this concern ignores the reality that these types of family structures already exist, as evidenced by the previously mentioned adoption by two nuns. Opponents also say this is a slippery slope toward legalizing adoption by multiple parties. Supporters of the previously proposed bills (e.g. HB 4131, 2009) have insisted that the language of the law would not allow “group adoption” and, furthermore, all current rules and procedures regarding the adoption process, including home visits and approval of candidates, would continue to be enforced (Stutzky, 2009).

Some argue that a second parent adoption policy would create odd legal relationships in which two adults unrelated to each other could be legally responsible for raising the same child. Critics wonder whether a court would give domestic partners who decide to split up, or two friends or relatives who had co-adopted and have a falling out, the same legal standing that two married parents have in a divorce (Stutzky, 2009). Still others insist the measure is unnecessary since Michigan law already allows for legal structures such as wills and power of attorney that can provide a level of security for children, and do so without undermining the institutions of marriage and family or creating potentially untenable legal relationships. Supporters point out, however, that although an attorney can prepare medical consent forms and nomination-of-guardian forms for the care of the child, these documents do not have the legal force of an adoption and there is no guarantee a court will uphold them (Perrin, 2002).

Some opponents also claim that instead of terminating parental rights, as in the case of step-parent adoptions and as outlined for unmarried partners by the proposed legislation, more should be done to strengthen the bonds between biological parents and children. Termination of parental rights, however, has historically been permitted when it is in the best interest of the child, and as noted, is currently permitted under step-parent adoptions. Second parent adoption may in fact strengthen biological ties by enabling more kinship adoptions. The Michigan Department of Human Services considers the possibility of kinship adoption as a primary factor in determining a child’s adoption placement (MIDHS, 2009b). Michigan has seen an increase in kinship care situations over recent years and the proposed

legislation would also apply to kinship adoptions in which a family member adopts a child after the parent dies or the parent's rights are terminated (Agyemang, 2006). According to recent Census data, 13% of single headed households in Michigan are raising grandchildren or other relative children (U.S. Census, 2011). However, single, elderly relatives may be reticent to adopt due to concerns regarding their health or financial capability (Stutzky, 2009). The Coalition for Adoption Rights Equality cites the example of a grandmother living alone who would like to co-adopt with a nephew who plays a prominent role in the children's lives (CARE, 2007). The proposed legislation would allow such grandparents who act as primary caregivers to jointly petition for adoption with another family member. The child would thus have access to the other relative's health care benefits as well as enjoy the assurance of a second legal parent sharing the responsibility for his or her well-being.

Finally, there are some critics who believe that allowing second parent adoption would promote homosexuality and the homosexual agenda. The American Family Association of Michigan insists that the "issue should not be about emotionally enabling adults who engage in homosexual behavior, it should be about the children" (Costello, 2008, p.2). Such opponents claim second parent adoption is not in the best interest of the child because gay couples are not appropriate adoptive parents. A spokesman for the Thomas Moore Law Center has noted, "The state should not be lowering their standards so they can unload kids in homes that are not healthy for them" (Kozlowski, 2007, p.2). In fact, the American Family Association thinks the law should be changed to not allow homosexuals to adopt as individuals (Kozlowski, 2007). Supporters say these claims are unfounded, and point to a wealth of evidence-based studies by reputable organizations that have found that children raised by LGBT parents do as well or better than children raised by opposite-sex parents (Stutzky, 2009). Some of the many respected professional associations in support of second parent adoption for unmarried couples include: American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Bar Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, National Association of Social Workers,

Child Welfare League of America, and the North American Council on Adoptable Children (CARE, 2007).

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has stated that “the weight of evidence gathered during several decades using diverse samples and methodologies is persuasive in demonstrating that there is no systematic difference between gay and non-gay parents in emotional health, parenting skills, and attitudes toward parenting. No data have pointed to any risk to children as a result of growing up in a family with one or more gay parents” (Perrin et al., 2002, p.343). The AAP also noted that growing up with LGBT parents may even confer some advantages to children as studies report they are “more tolerant of diversity and more nurturing toward younger children” compared to children of heterosexual parents, concluding that “children apparently are more powerfully influenced by family processes and relationships than by family structure” (Perrin et al., 2002, p.343).

Opponents of second parent adoption are also concerned that children exposed to homosexual behavior are more likely to become homosexual themselves (Costello, 2008). However, two recent studies by Cameron (2002) and Schumm (2010) that opponents have cited as evidence for this have been debunked for poor scholarship and “deliberate distortion of other publications” (Burroway, 2010). For example, both authors drew heavily from the personal stories of children of LGBT parents found in a gay parenting guide whose author “deliberately aimed to have 50% of the kids interviewed to be queer. Not because it is statistically reflective of the population, but to give it balance of perspective” (Burroway, 2010). This flagrant misrepresentation of data thus led the researchers to erroneous conclusions. In any case, it must be noted that the underlying accusation is premised on the assumption that an increase in LGBT-identified individuals is inherently negative and undesirable to society. Such a position is clearly prejudicial.

Conclusion

Just as conventional understanding about what constitutes a family is changing, societal definitions of what makes a good parent are also evolving. Whereas at one time Catholic immigrants (Axinn & Stern, 2008) and women over age forty (Herman, 2007) were

considered not to be suitable parents, today some critics charge that LGBT individuals are not appropriate parents. Parenting by unmarried and LGBT persons, however, is not a new phenomenon. Jessie Taft, an early leader in child welfare and ardent advocate for adoption, raised two children with her life-partner Virginia in the 1930s and is just one example among many (Herman, 2007).

While the focus here has been on what is in the best interest of the child, and rightly so, it must also be underscored that not allowing unmarried couples to adopt together is an abuse of their civil rights. These couples experience discrimination as a result of their marital status and this is a violation of Michigan's Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1976. Parenting is widely considered a "fundamental right," affirmed by several Supreme Court cases (Barusch, 2009). The proposed legislation to allow second parent adoption in the state of Michigan would guarantee the rights of both children and their unmarried parents to a variety of legal and financial benefits that most families take for granted. This policy should be enacted in order to provide the stability and security deserved by both parent and child.

Legalizing second parent adoption would not degrade the institution of marriage, nor would it promote a "homosexual agenda." Amending the adoption code so that "two unmarried persons may petition to adopt a child" would instead recognize the diversity that currently exists among Michigan families and provide equal protection for all families under the law. In addition to increasing the pool of adoptive parents and providing potential economic savings to the state, this important policy change would create a more supportive climate for current Michigan citizens and also convey an open and welcoming message that may help attract and retain more residents. Promoting the emotional and financial security and well-being of children and parents is a testament to true family values and will help advance the state of Michigan towards greater equality and prosperity.

References

- Agyemang, A. (2007, May 9). The Michigan Kinship Data Booklet. *Kinship Care Resource Center, School of Social Work, Michigan State University*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kinship.msu.edu>
- American Academy of Pediatrics; Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2002). *Coparent or second-parent adoption by same-sex parents*. Retrieved from American Academy of Pediatrics website: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;109/2/339.pdf>
- Ashenfelter, D. (2010, March 8). Battle lines drawn over custody challenge. *Detroit Free Press*. Retrieved from <http://www.afamichigan.org/2010/03/15/detroit-free-press-battle-lines-drawn-over-lesbian-custody-challenge/>
- Axinn, J. & Stern, M.J. (2008). *Social Welfare: A History of the American Response to Need* (7th ed). NY: Allyn & Bacon.
- Barusch, A.S. (2009). *Foundations of Social Policy: Social Justice in Human Perspective* (3rd ed). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Brooks/Cole.
- Burroway, J. (2010, October 17). "Children of Homosexuals" Researcher more apt to ape Paul Cameron. Retrieved from: <http://www.boxturtlebulletin.com/2010/10/17/27400>
- Coalition for Adoption Rights Equality (CARE), Inc., & Pepper Hamilton LLP. (2007, March). Second Parent Adoption: A Measure to Protect Michigan's Children. Retrieved from <http://www.secondparentadoption.org/publish/publishmenu.htm>
- Coalition for Adoption Rights Equality (CARE), Inc., & Pepper Hamilton LLP. (2009, April 22). *Memorandum of Law: House Bill 4131 and Michigan Constitutional Amendment, Art. Sec. 25*. Retrieved from Michigan House of Representatives website:

<http://www.house.mi.gov/SessionDocs/2009-2010/Testimony/Committee14-4-22-2009-5.pdf>

- Costello, A. (2008, November 25). Debates continue over same-sex adoptions. *Capital News Service*. Retrieved from http://cns.jrn.msu.edu/articles/2008_1125/gayadoption.html
- Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act, PA 453, MCL 37.2101, et seq. (1976).
- Gates, G.J., Badgett, M.V.L., Macomber, J.E., & Chambers, K. (2007, March). Adoption and foster care by gay and lesbian parents in the United States. Retrieved from The Williams Institute UCLA School of Law website: <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/FinalAdoptionReport.pdf>
- H.B. 4131. (2009, February 4). Adoptions by two unmarried persons. Michigan Legislature, 95th session. Retrieved from: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
- H.B. 4249. (2011, February 15). Second parent adoption. Michigan Legislature, 96th session. Retrieved from: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
- H.B. 5908. (2006, March 23). Adoption agency placement objections. Michigan Legislature, 93rd session. Retrieved from: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
- Herman, E. (2007, July 11). Adoption History: Jessie Taft (1882-1960). In *The Adoption History Project*. Retrieved from <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adoption/people/taft.htm>
- Heywood, Todd. (2011, February 17). Second parent adoption advocates see obstacles. *The Michigan Messenger*. Retrieved from: <http://www.michiganmessenger.com>

- Kozlowski, K. (2007, June 6). Bill Sparks Culture War – Proposal would allow second adult in nontraditional family to adopt. *The Detroit News*, p. 1B.
- Maluchnik, D. (2007, February 12). Michigan Catholic Conference Statement Regarding Second-Parent Adoption Legislation. In *Michigan Catholic Conference: Public Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.micatholicconference.org/public-policy/news-releases/mcc-statement-regarding-second-parent-adoption-legislation/>
- National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR). (2010, October). Adoption by LGBT parents. Retrieved from the National Center for Lesbian Rights website: http://www.nclrights.org/site/DocServer/2PA_state_list.pdf?docID=3201
- Perrin, E.C. & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2002) Technical Report: Coparent or Second-Parent Adoption by Same-Sex Parents. *Pediatrics*, 109, 341-344.
- Probate Code of 1939, PA 288, MCL 710.01 et seq. (2004).
- Romero, A.P., Baumle, A., Badgett, M.V.L., & Gates, G.J.. (2007, September). Census snapshot: Michigan. Retrieved from The Williams Institute UCLA School of Law website: <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/MichiganCensusSnapshot.pdf>
- S.B. 0167. (2011, February 17). Second parent adoption. Michigan Legislature, 96th session. Retrieved from: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
- Schumm, W. R. (2010). Children of homosexuals more apt to be homosexuals? A reply to Morrison and to Cameron based on an examination of multiple sources of data. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 72, 721-742.

State of Michigan Department of Human Services. (2007). Total state ward population, wards goal adoption, annual adoption. Retrieved from Department of Human Services website:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/FIA-AdoptTotWardPop_13088_7.pdf

State of Michigan Department of Human Services. (2008, January). Adopting a child in Michigan. Retrieved from Department of Human Services website:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-PUB-0823_221566_7.pdf

State of Michigan Department of Human Services. (2009a). State ward finalized adoptions by family structure. Retrieved from Department of Human Services website:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHSAdoptionsByFamilyStructure_283470_7.pdf

State of Michigan Department of Human Services. (2009b, July). Adoption program statement. *DHS Pub-255*. Retrieved from Department of Human Services website:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-PUB-0255_284892_7.pdf

Stutzky, S. (2009, July 27). *Legislative Analysis: Adoptions by Two Unmarried Persons, HB4131 (Substitute H-2)*. Retrieved from State of Michigan Legislature website:
[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(bpnfv355na5u4rnqhjy3cz55\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectname=2009-HB-4131](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(bpnfv355na5u4rnqhjy3cz55))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectname=2009-HB-4131)

U.S. Census Bureau. (22 March 2011). 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Children Characteristics. Generated by Christine Sauvé using American FactFinder.
Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2010). Adoption by family type: Second-parent. Retrieved from:
http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adoptive/second_parent.cfm