

Statement of Senator Daniel K. Akaka
On the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act (S. 1910)
May 16, 2012

I am proud, once again, to support and cosponsor this very important legislation – the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 2012. A large number of private and public employers – including my home state of Hawai'i – already provide domestic partner benefits to employees.

Whether or not you believe that same-sex marriage should be legally recognized, we should all be able to agree that all Americans should be granted the same rights and benefits, and be held to the same duties and obligations. Currently, Federal employees in domestic partnerships are denied important benefits that Federal employees' spouses may receive, including health insurance, retirement and disability benefits, and others. We must not ask our dedicated Federal employees to sacrifice the needs of their families and loved ones in order to serve their country.

If the Federal Government is to recruit and retain the most talented employees and become the employer of choice in this country, it must follow the lead of the private sector and offer domestic partner benefits to Federal employees.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I thank Senators Lieberman and Collins for their leadership on it.