



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Civil Partnership Bill – Update on pensions**

The Directors of Isis Financial Planners, the UK's leading authority on financial discrimination against same-sex couples, are giving their full support to an amendment to the Civil Partnership Bill that will be discussed early in the week beginning 24 May 2004, in the House of Lords.

The Liberal Democrat Peers Lord Lester of Herne Hill and Lord Goodhart, have tabled the amendments to be discussed in Grand Committee of the House of Lords. They are proposing that the right of a survivor to a State pension based, on his or her deceased partner's contributions, be backdated to the beginning of the 1988/89 fiscal year. Under the terms of the Bill as it stands, the surviving partner's right to a State pension would not be retrospective – only the years after the passing of the civil partnership legislation would count towards a pension. This amendment will provide civil partners with up to an extra 15 years of pension rights.

Isis Director Louis Letourneau said, *'It is not perfect but it is a very acceptable compromise. Going back to 1988 is logical, as this was when widowers achieved equality with widows. I can see no reason why the Government should not accept this amendment.'*

When the Bill was published at the end of March, the directors welcomed the Bill but were disappointed that the changes to pension rights for civil partners would not mirror those for married couples. The 1988/89 date has been chosen because this was when the right to a survivor's pension was extended to widowers – previously only widows had qualified for the pension. The amendment therefore puts surviving civil partners in the same position as widowers. If accepted, the amendment would also have implications for company pension schemes that contract out of the State system.



Letourneau added; *“We are still hoping that the Government will allow public service pension schemes such as the NHS and the teachers’ schemes to fully recognise the whole length of service for all civil partners on the same footing as married couples. Unfortunately, the Bill leaves the respective departments to amend these superannuation schemes and one can only hope that ministers will do the right thing.”*

The amendments will be discussed week commencing 24 May 2004 (scheduled to be Wednesday 26 May) in Grand Committee in the House of Lords, before being debated in the House of Commons. It is widely hoped that the Bill will receive Royal Assent in autumn 2004 and will become law towards the end of 2005.

## **Editors' Notes**

### **Resources for Journalists and the Media**

More information on this issue can be found at [www.gay-partnership-rights.info](http://www.gay-partnership-rights.info). Our main site, [www.gayfinance.info](http://www.gayfinance.info), contains a wealth of material on gay financial discrimination, and has been used by many organisations as the basis of their articles.

### **Isis Financial Planners Limited**

Isis was founded in February 2002 by Letourneau, Fleming and Mudge – three highly experienced Financial Planners who had previously worked for the gay financial advisers, Rainbow Finance. In their first 2 years of trading Isis have become the most prominent, totally independent, gay-focussed financial planners in the country, with help and advice offered to gay men, lesbians and same-sex couples. All three of them have been active in campaigning for change for many years. They see the proposed Bill as the best opportunity in years to bring about major reform.



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