SB 485 – NEXT OF KIN DIGNITY ACT – 2/16/05 — 2-21-05 10 SB 485

My name is Karl Olson. I am the director of PRIDE, a statewide organization that advocates for your gay and lesbian family members, neighbors and colleagues.

SB 485 recognizes the reality of family life in Montana: we do not all look alike. Some of us are elderly folks who will not remarry after a spouse dies. Some of us are single parents struggling to provide for our children. We are people with disabilities who desire more autonomy over their personal lives. We are people of faith who rely on a religious community to serve us in times of crisis. And we are – according to the 2000 Census – 1,200 Montana households headed by partners of the same gender.

SB 485 does not hold any of these situations up as the standard. It does not ask me to understand or accept the unique qualities of your family. Nor does it ask you to renounce or register your opinion of my household.

Rather, this bill creates a straightforward and affordable routine for ensuring that in a time of crisis, illness or death, our most basic affairs will be handled. Inevitably, each of us will face a day when we become vulnerable, dependent, bed-ridden, or not long for this world. SB 485 allows each of to prepare for life's somber experiences, privately, and with dignity.

This bill expands the circle of civic compassion.
Please vote "do pass" on Senate Bill 485.