

Dear Friend,

As a long-time supporter of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, I never thought I'd need their services.

But my life was turned completely upside down last January 26. That's when attack dogs mauled and killed my life partner, Diane Whipple. I soon found out that because Diane and I weren't legally married, I'm not entitled to sue the dogs' owners. I believe Robert Noel and Marjorie Knoller are responsible for the wrongful death of my partner. But California law says that only legal heirs — surviving spouses, children and parents — are entitled to sue for wrongful death.

*Noel and Knoller have lost the right to own dogs for three years.*

*I've lost my soul mate.*

The logic of our justice system escapes me. How can the state deny me or any lesbian or gay man the right to be married, and then base the right to sue on marital status?

It's time to change the laws so that domestic partners have some recourse in the future. The National Center for Lesbian Rights shares my commitment to fighting for a legal system that treats lesbians and gays fairly. NCLR's expertise in domestic partnership is unparalleled and their dedication unwavering.

For years, I've watched NCLR staff take on lawmakers, corporations, government agencies and school districts that discriminate against lesbians. Impressed with NCLR's vision and commitment, I've given money to the organization, and cheered its efforts from the sidelines.

Now I am a client, and there is no one else I would rather have represent me in this historic battle. I've supported NCLR for a long time; and I'm asking you to do the same. This kind of blatant discrimination must be stopped.

Lesbians and gay men everywhere deserve equal treatment and nothing less. With your help, we can make it happen.

Sincerely,

Sharon Smith