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**Governor McGreevey's Disclosure Reflects Nationwide Phenomenon**

El Cerrito, CA. The disclosure of New Jersey Governor McGreevey as being a gay American and his resignation because of consequences of his extramarital affair with a man throws the spotlight on a crisis affecting thousands of couples across America, one that has remained hidden from the public eye far too long. Over the past decade, the number of husbands and wives coming out has increased exponentially, according to Amity Pierce Buxton, Executive Director of the Straight Spouse Network (SSN). They come from every socioeconomic, ethnic, racial, and occupational group and from rural communities and towns as well as metropolitan centers.

"Up to two million gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals have ever married or will marry," Buxton estimates, based on research figures. "Some come out after a long struggle of trying to make a go of the heterosexual marriage that society prefers. Others have yet to disclose. Still others may stay closeted. When they come out, attention focuses on them. Their heterosexual spouses are largely forgotten. Family members and friends minimize the straight spouses' concerns. Few therapists understand their unique issues of sexual rejection, betrayal, and identity crisis. So, spouses cope alone, their anger and pain escalating. Once they find peer support in SSN, they resolve their profound issues constructively. With such support, everyone in the family gains, especially the children. Help is only a web address away: [www.ssnetwk.org/index.shtml](http://www.ssnetwk.org/index.shtml)

SSN has spouse contacts in every state, 65 support groups, and several Internet mailing lists to help straight husbands and wives deal with challenges that arise when their spouses come out. "We hope that the governor's wife will take advantage of our confidential support to help her work through the issues she faces," Buxton adds. "Meanwhile, if a constitutional amendment were passed, codifying marriage as only between a man a woman, many gay men and

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lesbians who want to couple and raise families with same-gender partners will continue to opt for the preferred heterosexual union as the governor did and end up with devastated families such as his.”

The Straight Spouse Network is a worldwide organization of current and former heterosexual spouses or partners of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender mates, providing confidential support to help spouses/partners and mixed-orientation couples heal and information to foster understanding between spouses, within families, and with the larger community.