



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN PRIDE MONTH

Statement by Secretary Norman Y. Mineta

June 2003

In the past 40 years, our country has discovered a commitment to diversity that for too long had gone unrecognized. As a result, millions of Americans from all backgrounds now are gaining opportunities to succeed, and to contribute to the work of this great Nation.

This month, we mark the contributions made by gay men and lesbians. Forty years ago, they were barred from employment with the Federal Government, a policy copied by many state and local governments and private-sector businesses. They were routinely denied security clearances, and if foreign, they were not even permitted to legally enter the United States, whether as tourists, businesspeople, students or immigrants. Fortunately, this has changed in recent years, unleashing the potential of these men and women to contribute to our economy and our society.

The same is true here at the Department of Transportation, where gay men and lesbians need no longer hide themselves or their families in order to join our mission to keep the American economy moving and help our fellow Americans travel safely. The work we do across the Nation is a cornerstone of America's economic health. We cannot get that job done without the full contributions of every person at DOT.

We have a responsibility to ensure a workplace where every one of our colleagues is treated with dignity and with respect for the talents and energy they bring to the work of the Department. That principle holds true without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

As gay and lesbian Americans have increasingly come forward to speak about their experiences, we have begun to understand with greater clarity the tremendous contributions the gay and lesbian community makes to this Nation – from the sciences, to education, the law, public policy and the arts. Those are the contributions we celebrate during National Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. The theme for Gay and Lesbian Pride Month this year is "The Dawn of a New Day" and, in this spirit, I urge all Department of Transportation employees to reaffirm our departmental commitment to diversity and inclusion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Y. Mineta', is positioned above the printed name. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Norman Y. Mineta