



## Home Depot Announces Gay Partner Benefits After Pet Fury

By 365gay.com

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Less than a day after a 365Gay.com story that Home Depot was offering pet insurance to its workers but not domestic partner benefits the giant hardware company announced it would change its policy and introduce health coverage to the partners of its unmarried workers including gays and lesbians.

Wednesday, 365Gay.com reported that Home Depot was one of four Fortune 500 companies offering pet insurance while refusing to give health care benefits to same-sex partners. ([365gay.com story](#))

Today, in a statement the company told workers that it would begin offering the benefits.

"The Home Depot is finally putting its people first," said Human Rights Campaign President Cheryl Jacques.

HRC, which took the company to task for its refusal to grant partner benefits is now focusing on the other three: Sprint, Ecolab and Waste Management.

"We now call on Sprint, Ecolab and Waste Management to recognize that good business is putting an employee's partner above the family pet," Jacques said.

Home Depot had been slated to earn a failing grade on HRC's Corporate Equality Index, to be released later this month. The addition of domestic partner health insurance benefits will raise its score to 71 percent - which is also Sprint's tentative score . Waste Management is slated to receive 43 percent; Ecolab will not be scored because the company has never replied to the HRC questionnaire. The index measures how equitably companies treat their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees, consumers and investors.

"The only thing keeping Home Depot from a perfect score is its lack of a non-discrimination policy covering gender identity," said HRC Education Director Kim I. Mills. "We will continue to work with the company to ensure all its employees get equal treatment."

In a 2004 survey of 459 companies, the Society for Human Resource Management reported that 34 percent offer same-sex benefits; 27 percent of respondents offered opposite-sex domestic partnership benefits.

by Doreen Brandt  
365Gay.com Newscenter  
Washington Bureau  
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