

# Sheryl Teslow and Tauni Waddington

This Lincoln, Nebraska couple supports Lambda Legal through its monthly giving program, the Justice Fund

**Sheryl Teslow and Tauni Waddington have been together for 19 years**, describing themselves as “as solid a couple as any you could hope to find.” Waddington works as a private practice therapist and serves as the executive director of an adolescent girls group home. Teslow has been a freelance court reporter for 32 years and is a co-owner of a freelance agency. Together, they talk about why they have supported equality as members of Lambda Legal’s monthly giving program, the Justice Fund, for nearly a decade.



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## What does the fight for equality mean to you both?

We have been together for 19 years, but in our home state of Nebraska we are legally strangers. We can’t get family health insurance, we can’t file joint tax returns, we can’t inherit as family members—the list goes on and on. We have signed all the documents that we think we need to protect ourselves and our relationship, but we also know there is no guarantee that they will be respected in a time of emergency. We want—we *need* a marriage license that is valid in all 50 states and that is equal in every way to the one our parents had. We want the real thing.

## Why do you support Lambda Legal?

Of all of the different types of organizations working for equality, it seems to us that Lambda Legal has the best chance to make tangible progress. Whether it’s DADT or marriage or workplace protections, the courts are where we have made the most progress and Lambda Legal is the one in the trenches doing all the hard work necessary to make it happen. Lambda Legal has been an integral part of most, if not all, the major victories in the LGBT community and we feel it makes the best use of our money.

## Why is monthly giving to Lambda Legal an important part of your philanthropic efforts?

We know that raising money is always a difficult process. By committing to a set amount every month we are adding a small degree of certainty in Lambda Legal’s budget process and that’s important to us. It’s important for us to know that our money is being used as effectively as possible.



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE JUSTICE FUND, VISIT [lambdalegal.org/365for365](http://lambdalegal.org/365for365), see our ad on page 18 or call 212-809-8585 ext. 334.**

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prescribe what those goals and values should be.” Greg Nevins, Supervising Senior Staff Attorney in Lambda Legal’s Southern Regional Office, explained, “A counseling session is not a free speech arena; you’re supposed to perform your job in a way that is conducive to a client’s mental health.”

Both Keeton and Ward lost their cases at the district court level, and the cases are currently under appeal. Lambda Legal filed amicus briefs in both cases in support of the schools, on behalf of

PFLAG and the Georgia Safe Schools Coalition (in *Keeton*) and for PFLAG, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, Affirmations and the Ruth Ellis Center (in *Ward*).

Ultimately, Lambda Legal argues, the First Amendment does not shield incompetent, unethical and affirmatively harmful performance of one’s profession. Ward and Keeton could, of course, exercise their First Amendment rights and criticize their chosen profession on this issue

and write scholarly articles about the purported benefits of “reparative therapy” and supposed shortcomings of current ethical standards. But as Lambda Legal argues in its brief, withholding counseling, steering clients toward potentially harmful therapies—which Keeton has considered offering students—or proselytizing to clients in a clinical setting are all harmful and unethical practices, and no law requires universities to award degrees or professional licenses for that. **L**