

1 [Apology from Margaret Spellings]

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3 **Resolution urging the United States Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, to**
4 **retract her condemnation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Stations (PBS)**
5 **from airing an episode of “Postcards from Buster” depicting a lesbian couple and**
6 **further urging the Secretary of Education to publicly apologize to gay, lesbian, bisexual**
7 **and transgender community and offer a public statement in support of tolerance,**
8 **multiculturalism and free speech.**

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10 WHEREAS, The United States Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings publicly
11 condemned the Public Broadcasting Stations (PBS) for expending public funds to air an
12 episode of an animated children’s program, “Postcards from Buster”, which included a lesbian
13 couple; and

14 WHEREAS, “Postcards from Buster” features an animated bunny rabbit named
15 “Buster” who visits a maple farm in Vermont, known for both recognizing same-sex civil
16 unions and producing fine maple syrup; and

17 WHEREAS, The episode called “Sugartime” is primarily about making maple syrup and
18 farm life and features a child named Emma whose parents are lesbians; and

19 WHEREAS, Past episodes of “Postcards from Buster” include depictions of families
20 from diverse backgrounds including a Mormon family in Utah, other Christian families, a
21 Muslim household, a Native American and a Hmong family; and

22 WHEREAS, Sixty three percent (63%) of PBS’s annual budget is derived from federal
23 funding; and

24 WHEREAS, In a letter written by Pat Mitchell, president and CEO of PBS, Margaret
25 Spellings contended that the episode “Sugartime” does not fulfill the intent Congress had in

1 mind for programming, that and that “many parents would not want their young children
2 exposed to the lifestyles portrayed in the episode”; and

3 WHEREAS, In response to Ms. Spellings’ letter, PBS chose not to distribute the
4 “Sugartime” episodes nationally; however WGBH in Boston and KQED in San Francisco have
5 already aired the first episodes and with plans for future rebroadcast of the “Sugartime”
6 episode; and

7 WHEREAS, When non-profit corporations apply for federal educational funds, they are
8 obligated to abide by federal guidelines which stipulate “Diversity will be incorporated into the
9 fabric of the series to help children understand and respect differences and learn to live in a
10 multicultural society”; and

11 WHEREAS, State law includes sexual orientation in prohibitions against harassment on
12 the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability; and

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Education’s proactive attempts to censure all forms of
14 media depiction of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people to accommodate
15 conservative religionists is disturbing and should greatly concern every American who values
16 free speech, protection of civil and human rights, tolerance and cultural pluralism; and

17 WHEREAS. Gay parents are integral patchwork of the diverse quilt of called the
18 American family and media images of gay and lesbian parents strengthen the psychological
19 and emotional well being of the child and affirms their place in the broader community of the
20 American family; and

21 WHEREAS. Educational programs which purport to foster cultural pluralism and
22 multicultural competency cannot afford to omit tolerance and understanding of varying forms
23 sexual orientation and gender identity from within their educational curriculum; and

24 WHEREAS, The absence of affirming and positive images of gay people in general and
25 gay parents in particular, fosters ignorance and misunderstanding in the general population

1 which often leads to verbal and physical abuse of students for their professed or perceived
2 sexual orientation; and

3 WHEREAS, Margaret Spellings actions and comments fosters intolerance,
4 homophobia and violence and sends the wrong message to producers of educational material
5 for children and youth; now, therefore, be

6 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
7 urges Margaret Spellings, United States Secretary of Education to retract her condemnation
8 of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Stations (PBS) for airing an episode of “Postcards
9 from Buster” depicting a lesbian couple; and be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges Margaret Spellings to
11 offer a public apology to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities and make a
12 public statement in support of tolerance, multiculturalism and free speech.

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