

**CLASSIFIED**

STARTS ON PAGE G5

# COMMENTARY

**SUZANNE FIELDS**

Forget what you may think about lesbianism. Forget whether you care if Heather has two mommies. Forget all the abstract intellectual issues that define this debate.

What do you think about two women riding in a convertible with the top down, kissing each other passionately on the mouth, while the 7-year-old son of one of them sits in the back seat, watching in bewilderment? What do you think when you see that the car carries a banner "Celebrating family values."

How do you feel that one of these women was confirmed by the Senate as an assistant secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development?

Sen. Barbara Boxer, the California Democrat who led the floor fight for confirming Roberta Achtenberg, one of the heavy kissers, defended her because she thinks public policy qualifications should be judged as different from "homosexual lifestyle."

"I think it's important to deal with qualifications," she says.

Fair enough. But don't character and moral issues make up a person's qualifications, too? Lifestyle tells us a great deal about men and women who want to be public servants.

*Suzanne Fields, a columnist for The Washington Times, is nationally syndicated.*

## Moral deregulation



Roberta Achtenberg

The photograph of the kissers is a scene from a video of the 1992 San Francisco Gay Pride parade; another scene portrayed a white-haired "God" in anal intercourse with "Uncle Sam." Their sign reads: "One nation under God."

Is this mockery a parade for a 7-year-old boy? Why is there so little concern for protecting a child?

In only a very short time, our society has moved from taking pride in appeals to moral righteousness to disdain for anyone who espouses virtue; from believing that public figures ought to display good judgment in public (if not always in private) to "rights" for public figures no matter what character qualities they display; from looking out for what's best for the children to condoning if not celebrating, exhibitionistic self-indulgence.

In 40 years, homosexuals have moved from rhetoric calling for them to blend into society, to become part of the power structure, to uncompromising visibility and "in your face" public sexuality. In a new book called "Family Values: Two Moms and Their Son," Phyllis Burke, one of the moms of the title, describes this new phase of militant homosexuality: "We are not like you. We will never be like you. Trying to

be like you is killing us."

Such analysis by a homosexual is applauded by other homosexuals. Imagine a heterosexual saying something like that. Homosexuals would call it "homophobia."

It's precisely such observations that cause concern about Roberta Achtenberg's prominence and power: As a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, she voted to bar the Boy Scouts from holding meetings of their troops in public schools because they refused to allow homosexuals to be Scoutmasters.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, a Democrat, describes a contemporary phenomenon called "defining deviancy down." He refers to our capacity for "moral deregulation" — redefining deviant behavior so that it appears to be normal. He specifically refers to the high level of violent crime, the exploding numbers of unwed mothers and single parent families that we all know weaken social standards: "We are getting used to a lot of behavior that is not good for us."

When we ignore or trivialize issues of immoral behavior and questionable character traits, we diminish our capacity to see deviancy when it appears. Roberta Achtenberg's confirmation has been hailed as a breakthrough — the highest federal appointment for a lesbian activist. Dare we care if her attitude is, "In your face"?