



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

ILTON J. SHAPP
GOVERNOR

February 17, 1976

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor
State of California
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Gerry:

I am writing you regarding the issue of gay rights at the request of Thomas F. Coleman, Coordinator of the California Committee for Executive Implementation of Gay Rights. I am well aware of the fine efforts that your administration has made in the decriminalization of sexual acts between consenting adults. We are presently working on similar legislation in Pennsylvania.

While I was in California recently, Mr. Coleman told me that he was impressed with our efforts at ending discrimination on the basis of sexual preference within the executive branch and asked that I write you about our progress. I agreed to do so and, therefore, would like to review the history of our state's involvement and our present progress.

Shortly after my reelection, in early 1975, I convened a meeting of representatives from ten state departments and representatives of the gay community from across the state. I asked them to define the problems that homosexuals were facing in Pennsylvania and advise me of future steps that I should take. This ad hoc Task Force first suggested that I issue an Executive Directive setting forth the policy of my administration to end discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. I issued such an Executive Directive in April, 1975, a copy of which is attached.

Thereafter, the Task Force began to explore various areas of state government that affect homosexuals, including employment, health, education, and the criminal justice system.

To date, we have had success in amending our state personnel manual to preclude discrimination on the basis of sexual preference, adopting a health service training program which will include issues of gay patients, and have established Internal Task Forces within the Departments of Education and Welfare which will explore all areas of discrimination in programs and policies within those departments. I have enclosed minutes of the last two Task Force meetings which will provide a more complete summary of the kinds of issues that are being explored.

The final recommendation of this Task Force was to establish a permanent Governor's Council for Sexual Minorities. I plan to appoint this Council within the next few weeks. It will be composed of openly gay representatives, state representatives and general community members. The purpose of the Council will be to further deal with the existing problems of discrimination because of a person's sexual preference. I have also enclosed a copy of the Executive Directive establishing the Council for your review.

I believe my efforts in this area are important and have been consistent with my view that any legitimate minority's rights must be protected by government. For too long, prejudices and stereotypes based on myths have forced many of our citizens to live in constant fear. I am sure you will agree that we, as Governors, have a responsibility to change these conditions.

I look forward to working closely with you and members of your staff in sharing information and addressing mutual problems in this and other areas.

Sincerely,

MILTON J. SHAPP
Governor

bcc: Thomas F. Coleman
Terry Dellmuth
Barry Kohn