

## **INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCES**

Family life is influenced by institutional forces. Media, religion, and government are three major institutions which profoundly affect families. The study conducted by the Task Force has revealed numerous ways in which these institutions have had an impact on families.

## MEDIA

The print media, television and radio broadcasters, and the film industry all affect families in very significant ways. With its limited time span and resources, the Task Force on Family Diversity was not able to study each media form in depth. It concentrated primarily on television because the impact of television on families appears to be significantly greater than that of any other single media form.

### Print Media

Nationally, the Task Force has noted the emergence of a variety of non-traditional family magazines during the past two years. Publishers, aware of public interest in the many aspects of family, now produce such periodicals as *Parenting*, *Fathers*, *Child*, *Children*, and *Grandparents*.<sup>1</sup>

Locally, the Task Force has been impressed with excellent reporting by the *Los Angeles Times* on issues of concern to families. Scores of such articles are cited in the notes to most sections and chapters of this report. The Task Force commends the *Los Angeles Times* for continuing excellence in the coverage of family issues.

### Television and Families

Building on student research,<sup>2</sup> testimony presented at public hearings,<sup>3</sup> and a team report on this subject,<sup>4</sup> the Task Force bases its recommendations concerning television and families on three major contentions:

- (1) Media, specifically commercial television, is a powerful and pervasive force in our society;
- (2) Portrayal of family diversity — variable family groups such as single-parent families, foster families, unmarried couples, gay or lesbian couples, families with senior or disabled members, or families of color — has improved, but is still lacking in quantity and quality on commercial television; and
- (3) As the city of origin for most television shows, the City of Los Angeles is uniquely situated to take an active and responsible role in working with the media.

**The Power and Pervasiveness of Television.** Twenty years ago writing about the influence of television was a simple task; television had not yet achieved its complex integration into all aspects of our lives and culture. The pervasiveness of television in contemporary society is documented by the following statistics:<sup>5</sup>

- \* 96% of households have a television.
- \* Each TV is on about 6.5 hours per day.
- \* Over 1,100 non-cable stations exist.
- \* 80% of households get at least 7 stations.

No one seriously doubts the social power of television. It has the power to inform and misinform; to shape attitudes, both positive and destructive; and to influence the self-image of individuals and groups. Television provides companionship to the lonely, especially the elderly. It forms the basis for shared experiences, from soap operas to great

cultural and historical events. Television teaches us directly and indirectly; it plays a major role in our socialization process. Its depiction of families and the diversity of family relationships can greatly affect the form and structures of families in the future by molding attitudes in the present.

Experts stress that co-viewing — parents watching television with their children — is crucial to translating television's messages into a positive educational rather than a negative and destructive influence. A parent's input and perspective can clarify misunderstandings, correct negative or stereotypical portrayals, and provide continuing examination of an issue long after the show is over.<sup>6</sup>

Television fills divergent needs of many diverse viewers.<sup>7</sup> For example, television families sometimes serve as surrogate families for those who are separated by long distances from their loved ones.

Marketing considerations play an important role in determining — and sometimes dictate — the content of television shows. Just as programming affects families, marketing affects programming. Mass media that is shaped around commercial interests obviously must appeal to the largest possible audience; program content is then usually formulated so as to avoid controversy and not to offend.<sup>8</sup> Program content is also directed toward those who have the power to consume and, thus, against those whom broadcast researchers consider to be “non-viable demographic groups,” such as the elderly, very young children, and certain minorities that do not have significant economic power. For example, even though television has great potential to educate young children, the exploitation of this potential often becomes subservient to the economic goal of selling toys, candy, and cereal.<sup>9</sup>

The impact of television on the subconscious mind is another critical concern to those monitoring the long-term affects of television on families. Whereas television was once a mere novelty or form of entertainment, today many viewers see television as a significant part of reality itself. Television has come to represent the viewer's instant connection to the “outside world”; its seamless format and fluid nature take on the attributes of real life, a dangerous proposition considering the inevitable fact that television depicts reality as being much simpler than, and often very different from, what it really is. As a surrogate for life, television may have the psychological effect of undermining the viewer's existential base or self awareness. The consequence of such prolonged passivity may be increased susceptibility to outside manipulation.<sup>10</sup>

Television is uniquely powerful for all of these reasons. In order to maximize the positive and minimize the negative effects of television, media consumers must: (1) become conscious of this power and the affect of the media on their lives, and (2) learn how to “read” the media — how to decipher its messages and images.

The Task Force finds that local government can take a more active and responsible role in promoting media literacy for adults and children.

The Task Force recommends that the Los Angeles Unified School District develop and implement a media education curriculum for use in elementary, junior high, and high schools. Just as children learn to read words in print, they also can learn to read the audio-visual images of today's mass media, learning the subtle influences of this technology.

In the opinion of the Task Force, such a media education program is not a "luxury curriculum" but a necessity. Resources on the subject are readily available to the school district.<sup>11</sup>

The Task Force recommends that the Los Angeles County Department of Children's Services encourage family and social service systems to be aware of the media and its connection to dysfunctional home situations. For example, advertising that popularizes junk foods and sweets can contribute to the undernourishment or malnutrition of many children. The person who does the family grocery shopping can be educated to be aware of and resist persuasion techniques aimed directly at the family pocketbook. The Department of Children's Services could commission the development of a "media awareness checklist" or conduct conferences and workshops to educate "influence leaders" — including family counselors, social workers, scout and youth leaders, and librarians — about the media and its impact on families with dependent children.

The Task Force on Family Diversity also suggests that local government agencies and officials take a more active and responsible role in promoting the positive use of commercial television.

The Task Force recommends that the Mayor encourage department heads to develop more public service announcements (PSAs) about the social, employment, housing and cultural programs and services available to local families. These PSAs should be placed around shows that are watched by the population for whom the services are directed.

The Task Force commends the CBS Broadcast Group for promoting the positive use of television by developing the first "Television Worth Watching Awards" honoring educators who use commercial television to enrich the education of their students. The Task Force also commends KCET Television and KFWB Radio for airing programs of exceptional quality involving changing family demographics and issues.

**Portrayals of Family Diversity.** With the exception of the depiction of seniors, which has improved tremendously over the years, the portrayal of family diversity is still lacking in quantity and accuracy on commercial television.

In the 1950s, minorities were almost totally absent from television, often at the insistence of sponsors. The civil rights movement of the 1960s paved the way for a few Blacks in feature roles, but Latinos, Asians and American Indians were still absent from the tube except in the form of unflattering and inappropriate stereotypes. The 1970s saw more minorities, usually Blacks, in situation comedies. In the 1980s, the imbalances continue, especially considering the disproportionate number of minority viewers.<sup>12</sup>

Women and girls have also been underrepresented on television. While females comprise over 50% of the population, they consistently take only 25 to 30 percent of the film and television roles. The latest Screen Actors Guild statistics confirm the underrepresentation. A recent study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs reported that women are still too frequently cast as "housewives, secretaries and damsels in distress." Last year, the Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women held public hearings on this problem.<sup>13</sup>

There are many discrepancies between television families and current family demographics.<sup>14</sup>

\* On television, 100% of single-mother families are middle class or higher; in real life, 69% of all families headed by women are poor.

\* On television, 80% of all Black children are upper-middle class or higher; in real life, 50% of all Black children live in poverty.

\* On television, more than 50% of all children in single-parent households live with their fathers who experience no economic difficulty raising them; in real life, 90% of all children in single-parent homes live with poverty stricken mothers.

These statistics also imply that lower-class and blue-collar families are underrepresented on television. A 1981 study concluded that not only is the depiction of poverty avoided, but television presents a glamorized vision of economic deprivation omitting or minimizing hardship, idealizing the supposed benefits of a meager existence, and depicting the affluent as amoral.<sup>15</sup>

Although a few programs have depicted homosexuals or persons with disabilities in a positive light, families with members who are gay, lesbian, or disabled are also notably underrepresented on television.

Behind the camera, underrepresentation of minorities translates to underemployment. Last year, several lawmakers and union representatives complained that the Federal Communications Commission had failed to enforce its affirmative action guidelines. They called for new legislation to insure that women and minorities are more fairly represented in the broadcast industry. Statistics show that in 1986, women held 37.4% of all commercial broadcast jobs and 42.5% in public broadcasting, up from 35% and 39.5% respectively in 1982. Employment for minorities increased from 15.1% to 16% in commercial broadcasting and 14.8% to 15.7% in public broadcasting over the same time span.<sup>16</sup> The tradition of "last hired, first fired" also has a disproportionate impact on minorities, as evidenced last year during the KNBC layoffs.

Improved minority employment practices are important not only from an overall employment perspective, but also because of the likelihood that, with more varied backgrounds among directors and writers, increased diversity would find its way to the screen.

The Task Force on Family Diversity suggests that the City of Los Angeles take a more active and responsible role in promoting family diversity and social responsibility in commercial television and radio.

The Task Force also notes the power of timely criticism by public officials of works that demean or devalue diversity through insensitive, inaccurate, or absence of portrayal. For example, Councilman Michael Woo's public comments about the "Year of the Dragon" resulted in the distributor issuing a disclaimer to the film.

Finally, the Task Force recommends that the City of Los Angeles, through the Office of Contract Compliance of the Board of Public Works, and through other appropriate officials, encourage networks to hire more diverse staff in positions of authority.

## MEDIA AND FAMILY: RECOMMENDATIONS

94. The Task Force recommends that the Los Angeles Unified School District develop and implement a media education curriculum for use in elementary, junior high, and high schools.

95. The Task Force recommends that the Los Angeles County Department of Children's Services encourage family and social service systems to be aware of the media and its connection to dysfunctional home situations. The department could commission the development of a "media awareness checklist" or conduct conferences and workshops to educate "influence leaders" — including family counselors, social workers, scout and youth leaders, and librarians — about the media and its impact on families with dependent children.

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97. The Task Force recommends that the City of Los Angeles, through the Office of Contracts Compliance of the Board of Public Works, and through other appropriate officials, encourage networks to hire more diverse staff in positions of authority.

### Media and Family: Notes

<sup>1</sup> Horovitz, Bruce, "Family's the 'In' Thing — and Publishers Know It," *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, Michael, "Family Diversity and Television," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part Two*, p. S-909.

<sup>3</sup> Thoman, Sister Elizabeth, Executive Editor of *Media and Values*, "Families and Media Literacy," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 248; Westbrook, Jay, Media Coordinator, American Society on Aging, "Portrayal of Seniors and Families on Television," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> This section of the Task Force report is either paraphrased from or taken verbatim from the following topical report: Ishizuka, Karen, Director of Development for Pacifica Foundation, "Media Report," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part One*, p. S-179.

<sup>5</sup> Testimony of Jay Westbrook, *supra*, note 3.

<sup>6</sup> Myers-Wallis, Judith, "Media's Message Can Fool Kids," *Media and Values* (Spring, 1986). Also, taped interviews with: Dr. Rene Cohen, child psychologist; Dr. Jack Wetler, psychological consultant to television shows.

<sup>7</sup> Taped interview with Nicholas Van Dyke, National Council on Television and Families.

<sup>8</sup> Grunwald, David, "Network Nexus: TV's Guardians of Taste," *Popular Culture: Mirror of American Life* (1977).

<sup>9</sup> Hague, Barth, "Audience for Sale," *Media and Values* (Spring, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> Birkerts, Sven, "Television: The Medium in the Mass Age," *Michigan Quarterly Review* (1984).

<sup>11</sup> The Media Action Resource Center (MARC), 475 Riverside Drive, #1370, NY, NY 10115 offers comprehensive media awareness programs and materials. MARC also offers an eight-unit course for teachers and parents. *Media and Values*, a quarterly review of media issues and

trends is published locally at 1962 S. Shendoan, Los Angeles, CA 90034. The Washington Association for Television and Children (WATCH), P.O. Box 5656, Washington, D.C. 20016 has developed a *WATCH Critical Viewing Guide* to help pre-school and elementary school children learn about media. The National Council for Families and Television, 20 Nassau St., #200, Princeton, NJ 08542 publishes *Television and Families*, a quarterly review featuring research and industry reports. Other groups can offer assistance: Action for Children's Television, 41 Austin St., Newtonville, MA 02160; National Telemedia Council, 120 E. Wilson St., Madison, WI 53703; National Coalition on Television Violence, P.O. Box 647, Decatur, IL 62521.

<sup>12</sup> Jason-Beck and Sobal, "The Social World of Heavy Television Viewers," *Journal of Broadcasting* (Winter, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> "Hearings on Women in Media Open," *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1987.

<sup>14</sup> Jones, Michael, *supra*, note 2.

<sup>15</sup> Gould, Stern, and Adams, "TV's Distorted Vision of Poverty," *Communication Quarterly* (Fall, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> "Lawmakers Say FCC Lags in Affirmative Action," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1987; Corporation for Public Broadcasting, *Policy Development and Planning Report*, (February, 1987).

## RELIGION

A study of the changing family would not be complete without acknowledging the fact that families and religious institutions have significant, and often profound, influences on each other.

The Task Force on Family Diversity received information reflecting several viewpoints on the subject of religion and contemporary families. A Jewish rabbi, an Episcopal priest and a Roman Catholic priest testified at the public hearings.<sup>1</sup> Two clergymen served as members of the Task Force.<sup>2</sup> Two essays were submitted on religion and families.<sup>3</sup> The reports of two research teams also addressed religious issues.<sup>4</sup> These views, of course, are only a sampling of the wide range of divergent views on the subject of religion and family.

In deference to the constitutional mandate of Separation of Church and State, and out of respect for differing personal and organizational philosophies, this report has reserved its factual findings and policy recommendations to the secular arena. However, the Task Force believes that some of the testimony provided at its public hearings illustrate how the changing family is affecting most social and economic institutions, religious and secular alike.

**Some Religious Responses to the Changing Family.** At its public hearings, the Task Force on Family Diversity heard from religious leaders regarding some institutional responses to changing family demographics and structures.

Rabbi Daniel Bridge testified about how the Pacific Southwest Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations — a council of about 65 congregations — is attempting to meet the needs of contemporary family forms. Several new programs are operating, including a revised family-life education curriculum for the schools, a daycare program to meet the needs of dual-career or single-parent families, seminars and counseling on topics such as divorce or gay and lesbian relationships, and conducting a survey of the family needs of congregants and all member congregations. Rabbi Bridge explained how these new programs resulted from the Council creating a Task Force on the Changing Family:<sup>5</sup>

By 1980, it had become fairly obvious that a growing percentage of Jewish families didn't fit into the traditional, and I'm using that term advisedly for lack of knowledge of a better one, or nuclear-family image — two parents and two or more children and perhaps a grandparent or two, housed under one roof. And at that time to most of the leaders of the community the fact that families were changing was obvious mostly because of divorce. Children were falling behind in religious school because a noncustodial parent sometimes would not bring them to school. On the weekends, our Rabbis began to see a number of ritual ceremonies with just one parent present. Then single-parent families, and even recently-divorced singles began disappearing from congregational life and congregational participation. The theories are that they either were uncomfortable in their new roles because the synagogue wasn't making them feel at home anymore or because of financial burdens, they would not pay membership fees. Then, all of a sudden, when leadership began to open its eyes to these issues, we began to see all

kinds of new family units — unmarried couples, gay and lesbian Jews, seniors that were feeling alone, and the list goes on and on.

In 1980, the Pacific Southwest Council established the Task Force on the Changing Family. Initially, and for a number of years, the task force focused on raising consciousness in the congregations, particularly with the Rabbi, support staff, and congregants. And the formats that were used were primarily two. One was seminars for professionals and also lay leaders. Another was a speakers bureau that went out and spoke at the congregations. During the last two years, we've moved out of the realm of consciousness-raising to helping congregations meet the needs of changing families in their congregations.

Father John Bruno, pastor of the Episcopal Church of St. Athanasius and St. Paul, discussed the variety of families in his parish, and made several recommendations to the Task Force:<sup>6</sup>

Let me talk about the reality of family life in Echo Park. As a priest, I come in contact with all sorts and conditions of human beings. I come into contact with people of every nationality and race, people of every sexual persuasion, and people who have all sorts of needs. In my congregation, I have single-parent families, with male single parents or female single parents, gay single parents, either lesbian or male gay. I have couples who are families, both heterosexual and homosexual couples. I have young families and old families. I have married families and nonmarried families in my congregation. I have two-parent families with children, and single people looking for some kind of family involvement, who are bonding in communities with other married couples. So it's obvious to me that the definition of the family that we've known in the past is no longer applicable, at least not in my congregation. . . .

The Task Force is mindful that not all religious congregations have undergone such significant changes in family demographics and structures as those described by Rabbi Bridge and Father Bruno. However, these two accounts do show that issues involved in family diversity extend beyond the secular domain.

### Religion and Families: Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bridge, Rabbi Daniel, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, "Task Force on Changing Family" *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 135; Bruno, Father John, Church of St. Athanasius and St. Paul, "Response of the Episcopal Church to the Changing Family," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 170; Fleck, Father James, Roman Catholic Priest, "Response of the Roman Catholic Church to the Changing Family," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Allan Freehling, President, Board of Rabbis of Southern California; Father Robert Brown, St. James Episcopal Church.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, Father Robert, "The Family in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part One*, p. S-552; Duncan, Father David, "On Church Recognition of Homosexual Household Relationships," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part One*, p. S-555.

<sup>4</sup> Donovan, E.H. Duncan, "A Report on Religion and the Family," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part One*, p. S-547; Himes, Line & Povern, "Report on Gay and Lesbian Couples," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part One*, p. S-192.

<sup>5</sup> Testimony of Rabbi Daniel Bridge, *supra*, note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Testimony of Father John Bruno, *supra*, note 1.

## CITY GOVERNMENT

The government of the City of Los Angeles has a powerful institutional influence on local family life. The city passes ordinances, adopts policies, collects and spends revenues, manages programs, lobbies other branches and levels of government, and employs tens of thousands of workers. These government activities directly and indirectly affect families throughout the city.

This portion of the Task Force report focuses on how the City of Los Angeles, in its various administrative and legislative capacities, can better serve the needs of local residents and their families.

### The City as Employer

The City of Los Angeles, through its various agencies and departments, employs about 40,000 workers.<sup>1</sup> The primary civilian workforce of city government consists of about 20,000 employees. An additional 10,000 sworn personnel work for the Police Department and Fire Department. Another 10,000 people are employed by the Department of Water and Power. As an employer, the city can assure respect for family diversity and ensure that family status or household composition is not used as a basis for discrimination.

### Minimum Wage

Research by the staff of the California Industrial Welfare Commission indicates that it would be necessary to raise the minimum wage to \$5.01 per hour to lift minimum wage workers to the standard of living they had in 1967.<sup>2</sup> Statistics show that about 30% of minimum-wage workers are heads of households, a majority of them being women or minorities.<sup>3</sup>

Last year, attempts by the state Legislature to raise the minimum wage from \$3.35 per hour resulted in a governor's veto after receiving strong opposition from groups such as the California Chamber of Commerce.<sup>4</sup> Other local organizations such as the Mexican Chamber of Commerce, United Neighborhoods Organizing Committee, and the East Valleys Organization asserted the need for an increase.<sup>5</sup>

The state Industrial Welfare Commission recently approved an increase in the minimum wage to \$4.25 per hour. While any increase will help workers with dependents, a higher minimum wage is still needed. The Task Force on Family Diversity commends the City of Los Angeles for increasing the pay of its own minimum-wage workers to \$5.01 per hour.<sup>6</sup> The Task Force recommends that the City Council and the Mayor continue to press Congress, the California Legislature and the Industrial Welfare Commission to increase the minimum wage for all workers to \$5.01 per hour in 1989.

### Flexible Scheduling

Because of extraordinarily dense freeway traffic, commuting to and from work is already a major problem for many employees. Unless some innovative actions are taken, work-related commuting will only become more time consuming. Between now and the year 2000, the greater Los Angeles area is expected to experience the nation's largest overall population growth.<sup>7</sup> The region will also gain some 805,000 new jobs in that period.<sup>8</sup> Demographers predict that the labor force also will become older and more diverse by the turn of the century.<sup>9</sup>

Shifting workers away from the standard 9-to-5 work schedule could help ease transportation problems.<sup>10</sup> Not all work needs to be done during these hours, not all work needs to be done at the jobsite, and not all employees must work fulltime.<sup>11</sup> Rearranging work schedules to allow for more flex-time, part-time, and home-based work could also fit the lifestyle needs of workers with dependent children,<sup>12</sup> and those who care for elderly parents.<sup>13</sup> The city encourages ridesharing and has adopted some flexibility in scheduling; much more is necessary.

For several years, Councilwoman Joy Picus, chair of the council's Personnel and Labor Relations Committee, has suggested ways to bring the workplace into line with the needs of today's family. She has called for revised employment practices, such as dependent care, "cafeteria-style" benefits packages, and flexible work hours. The Task Force on Family Diversity commends Councilwoman Picus for her leadership in developing and promoting a "Family Economic Policy" for the City of Los Angeles.

### Child Support Payments

Councilwoman Ruth Galanter and City Controller Rick Tuttle have proposed that the city help collect child support payments from city employees with support obligations.<sup>14</sup>

Under the plan, the city controller's office would provide the names of all city employees to the district attorney's office to be cross-referenced against names of parents who are delinquent in child support payments. City employees with child support obligations, whether delinquent or not, could also request that the city withhold the monthly payment from their paychecks and forward it to the custodial parent.

Two years ago, the controller exchanged names with the district attorney, identifying 185 city employees who together owed more than \$1 million in past due child support.

The Task Force on Family Diversity commends Councilwoman Ruth Galanter and Controller Rick Tuttle for their leadership in developing and promoting the child support payroll deduction program. The Task Force recommends that the City Council and the Mayor approve the plan.

### Employee Benefits

The structures and demographics of local families have changed over the years. A recent survey of the civilian workforce demonstrates that city workers and their families have been a part of this change.

Last year, the Personnel Department sent a questionnaire to 20,000 civilian workers, 8,000 of whom responded.<sup>15</sup> The results show that the city has a diverse workforce:<sup>16</sup>

- \* About 11% have a "traditional" marital arrangement with one employed spouse and one homemaker spouse.
- \* About 49% are part of a dual-income household, with both spouses employed outside the home.
- \* About 5% live with a domestic partner.
- \* About 35% are single.

The city's present employee benefits package favors employees with homemaker spouses over all other living arrangements; about two-thirds of those responding to the survey predictably favored the city switching to a flexible benefits plan.<sup>17</sup>

The Task Force has studied existing and proposed benefit programs involving family sick leave, family bereavement leave, health and dental plans, and dependent care. The findings and recommendations of the Task Force are based on student research,<sup>18</sup> public hearing testimony<sup>19</sup> and research done by Task Force members,<sup>20</sup> as well as information provided by the City Personnel Department, the City Administrative Officer, and the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst.

**Historical Background.** The terms "employee benefits," or "fringe benefits," have been used interchangeably to refer to the extra payments, services, and insurance that, together with salary, comprise an employee's total compensation. Health insurance, sick leave, leaves for personal purposes such as maternity or bereavement, pension plans, and vacation benefits are traditional components of employee benefits programs. However, in today's competitive employment marketplace, the purpose and point of employee benefits is often overlooked or ignored; in the context of the city, as elsewhere, a circumspect examination reveals that the traditional benefits package no longer meets the needs of most current employees.

Years ago, the paycheck or weekly wage represented the total remuneration for an employee's services. During the Industrial Revolution, pension plans, with long deferred vesting and strict employee controls, were introduced in an attempt to keep an employee tied to a particular job.<sup>21</sup> During the World War II labor shortages, salary alone was no longer a sufficient inducement to attract the desired personnel; something more had to be offered. Since wages and salaries were subject to the federal stabilization rules that had been enacted during the Depression, employers were compelled to offer different kinds of employee benefits in order to compete for the limited labor supply.<sup>22</sup>

Benefits were originally designed, in other words, as a tool to attract and hold the desired type and number of employees. Contemporary analysts still acknowledge that benefits plans "should aid (or at least not impede) the hiring of desired people."<sup>23</sup> After the employee has been attracted to a particular employer by the offer of certain types of benefits, the agreement by the employer to compensate the employee with such benefits becomes a contractual obligation. Indeed, California courts have held that benefits, such as retirement benefits, "do not derive from the beneficence of the employer, but are properly part of the consideration earned by the employee."<sup>24</sup>

Since the philosophy of employee benefits is to satisfy some of the employee's needs, in addition to the need for monetary compensation, it is critical that the employer understand the nature of those needs. If a workforce were homogeneous, the needs of all employees would be fairly easily discernible by the well-informed employer, and the design of an attractive benefits package would pose no problem;<sup>25</sup> an employee heading a single-wage-earner family traditionally needed life, medical, and accident insurance plans covering the employee, and sometimes the employee's dependents.<sup>26</sup>

In today's workforce, women compose 45% of those employed.<sup>27</sup> While the number of working women who have young children is increasing, the average working woman still earns only about 60% of

what the average working man earns.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps even more significantly, with the number of elders in our society growing steadily, employees, and female employees in particular, face increased demands to care for aging family members.<sup>29</sup> Both children and family elders present examples of financial dependency that create special hardships for women whose salaries are based on the traditional male head-of-household nuclear family model. A realistic assessment of employee needs would require breaking with tradition.

Demographics cited throughout this report demonstrate how much family structures have changed over the years.<sup>30</sup> To be competitive, an employer must now compensate an employee with a total compensation package that meets the employee's particular needs and that the employee can utilize fully. For example, the single working mother needs child care benefits and sick leave to care for family members, but may not need, or be in a position to utilize, a deferred compensation plan or spousal medical coverage.

Yet, the most important problem with current benefits programs remains the inequity in total compensation for two employees performing the same job. Discrimination has been defined as the making of decisions based on criteria other than productivity.<sup>31</sup> The decision to compensate one employee in the form of employee benefits at a higher level than another employee is discriminatory when the only basis for making the decision is the fact that the privileged employee conforms to an outdated societal norm which the benefits package was originally designed to serve. Many employers, including the City of Los Angeles, need to reexamine their traditional program with an eye toward developing a means of assuring that each employee is compensated at a level equal to the compensation given other employees doing the same job in the same job classification. Those employers who refuse to recognize the changing family lifestyles of today's employees will find themselves not only out of the competition for the most desired workers, but also burdened with a benefits program that can only be described as wasteful.<sup>32</sup>

**Current City Programs.** The basic benefits currently available to city employees include health and dental care, retirement, vacation, sick leave and bereavement leave. Employees have a choice of four health plans, under each of which the city subsidizes monthly premiums at a rate agreed upon in each employee group's Memorandum of Understanding.<sup>33</sup> Retirement benefits are available to all employees, and several options are available upon retirement for payment of accrued benefit funds.<sup>34</sup> Vacation leave is available at a rate based on the employee's number of years of city service.<sup>35</sup> Sick leave due to illness of the employee is also available with the number of days being negotiated between the city and the employee's group and memorialized in the Memorandum of Understanding. Sick leave is also available for the employee to care for an ill family member, as that term is defined by ordinance.<sup>36</sup> Finally, bereavement leave is offered for the death of a family member, as defined by ordinance.<sup>37</sup>

With these basic benefits available to all city employees, the quality, and in some cases, the quantity, of benefits, may be directly related to the employee's marital status. In the area of health benefits, for example, the subsidy negotiated by the city is generally intended to cover the cost of the monthly premium for the lowest cost health care plan for the employee, spouse, and one dependent.<sup>38</sup> The total benefit subsidy negotiated, therefore, is considered part of each employee's total compensation package, but not every employee receives the full benefit. In



1986, for example, a city employee who was a member of the clerical unit, received a maximum monthly subsidy for health care of \$253.00.<sup>39</sup> If the employee were to elect the Kaiser program, this subsidy would have been sufficient to insure the employee, the employee's spouse, and one dependent child.<sup>40</sup> A single employee electing Kaiser coverage, however, would not have received any monetary reimbursement for the unexpended part of the subsidy which, in this example, would total more than \$160.00. From this one example, it appears clear that single employees are not treated fairly by the benefit plan.

In addition to treating single employees differently than married employees, employees with domestic partners also receive fewer benefits than married employees. While an employee may have his or her spouse covered free of charge on the basic health plan, not so for domestic partners. An employee may take sick leave to care for a needy spouse, but not for an ailing domestic partner.<sup>41</sup> An employee is entitled to bereavement leave upon the death of a spouse, but not when his or her domestic partner dies.<sup>42</sup> Also, an employee may elect to have survivor benefits paid to a spouse from the employee's retirement fund after the employee's death, but survivor benefits are not available to a surviving domestic partner.<sup>43</sup>

**Meeting Employees' Needs.** Single workers and employees with domestic partners are not being compensated fairly under the current employee benefits plan. The needs of dual-income married couples are not being met either. For example, a city employee with a working spouse will not apply for spousal medical coverage if the spouse has medical coverage through his or her own employer. Many of these workers would prefer a flexible benefits plan that would allow substitution of a needed and usable benefit, such as dependent care, for an unusable one.

In addition to increased demand for child care services, employees are beginning to ask for dependent care for aging parents. In fact, employees who must become elder-caregivers may soon outnumber those who care for dependent children.<sup>44</sup> Adult children provide 80% of the health and social services needed by their aging parents, and the great majority of these caregivers are women.<sup>45</sup> Recent studies reveal work-related problems with those workers who care for elders, such as lateness, absenteeism, excessive personal phone use, and excessive stress.<sup>46</sup>

Other employee problems and concerns run the gamut from substance abuse, marital problems, and financial stress, to mid-life crisis. These problems are manifested in such forms as depression, anger, anxiety, sleeplessness and exhaustion. The result can be costly to the employee in terms of physical and mental well-being, and to the employer in terms of lost time and impaired work performance.

As an employer with a commitment to the well-being of its employees, as exemplified by programs such as the annual "Wellness Fair," the City of Los Angeles should develop more Employee Assistance Programs to help employees during times of personal or family crises. The Task Force recommends that the city contract with an outside agency to establish programs that would provide employees with confidential counseling on a variety of matters, including substance abuse, relationship problems, retirement planning, financial investing, and dependent care.

**Solutions and Recommendations.** The city has recognized that its benefits programs need to be revised. Last year, the City Council

hired a consulting firm to assess the feasibility of adopting a flexible or "cafeteria style" benefits program.<sup>47</sup> A survey of city workers showed that two-thirds wanted the city to adopt such a flexible benefits program.<sup>48</sup>

A flexible benefits plan (also known as "cafeteria" plan) would allow employees more choice in which benefits they receive, such as health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, dependent life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, long term disability insurance, child care, elder care subsidy, vision insurance, group auto insurance, savings plan contributions, and cash.

There are three basic types of cafeteria plans. The first, the modular design, presents employees with a choice of several preselected benefits packages. The second, or flexible spending account, gives the employee a choice between taxable cash and pretax payment of nontaxable expenses. The third, or "core-plus" options plan, allows employees to select among various options which complement a fixed core of benefits for all employees.

Whatever type of plan is selected, these benefits plans are beneficial to employees only if the plan chosen meets the employee's particular needs. The Task Force on Family Diversity recommends that the City Council give approval to the Personnel Department to move forward with the implementation phase of the proposed flexible benefits program. The Task Force further recommends that the City Council resolve to eliminate marital status discrimination in the distribution of benefits pursuant to its benefits programs.

Since the issues of child care and elder care pose similar problems for employees, the Task Force recommends that any plan extending child care benefits to employees be expanded to include elder care, in essence, making both "dependent care" benefits.

The city should also take a more active role in the development and implementation of dependent care programs. The city could use its internal systems of communication to disseminate medical findings, estate planning information, and other information relating to aging and the care of elders. Workshops could be provided and support groups formed to help employees deal with elder care. The city might also develop a regionwide network of resources and referral services to provide caregivers with information about available child care and elder care centers and encourage employees to make use of these services.

The Task Force on Family Diversity recommends that the Mayor issue an executive order directing the Personnel Department to review current city personnel practices and authorizing it to take whatever steps are necessary, including meeting and conferring with employee groups, to modify and enhance the city's role as a model employer in the area of dependent care, flexible work schedules, expanded maternity and paternity leave, and the use of leaves to care for elderly dependent relatives. Additionally, the Mayor should direct Project Restore, which is presently working to restore City Hall, to study the feasibility of including an on-site dependent care center in its restoration plans.

**Unfairness to Domestic Partners.** The facts are in, and the city should recognize that a significant number of its employees are living in domestic partnerships, be they same-sex or opposite-sex relationships. The Task Force on Family Diversity estimates that about 8% of the city's civilian employees have domestic partners.<sup>49</sup> The Task Force finds that

these employees are being treated unfairly under the present benefits system.

In recent years, several municipalities have extended benefits to government employees and their domestic partners.<sup>50</sup> In other cities, such proposals are under consideration.<sup>51</sup> The City of Los Angeles should now take positive action on the domestic partnership benefits issue.

Some unfairness would be eliminated if the city were to adopt a flexible benefits plan that does not discriminate on the basis of marital status in the extension of benefits. Other inequities to domestic partners should also be remedied immediately.

For example, it is patently wrong to deny an employee either family sick leave or bereavement leave when his or her domestic partner is seriously ill or dies. Presently, the City Administrative Code does just that.<sup>52</sup> To implement reform in the area of family sick leave and bereavement leave in a responsible manner, the city must first define the term "domestic partners." The Task Force on Family Diversity recommends that the City Council amend the City Administrative Code to include the term "domestic partner" in the list of "immediate family" relationships for which an employee is entitled to take family sick leave and bereavement leave. The following definition of "domestic partner" should be adopted, and the city's Personnel Department should be authorized to establish appropriate procedures to verify the domestic partnership status of employees who claim eligibility for sick leave or bereavement leave:<sup>53</sup>

Domestic partners are two persons who declare that:

- (1) They currently reside in the same household, and have been so residing for the previous 12 months.
- (2) They share the common necessities of life.
- (3) They have a mutual obligation of support, and are each other's sole domestic partner.
- (4) They are both over 18 years of age and are competent to contract.
- (5) Neither partner is married.
- (6) Neither partner is related by blood to the other.
- (7) They agree to notify the appropriate agency within 30 days if any of the above facts change.

The extension of family sick leave and bereavement leave to employees who have domestic partners does not require complex legal analysis or extensive fiscal debate. Legally, the city has the discretion to grant such benefits, and the financial impact to the city would be negligible.<sup>54</sup>

Granting retirement benefits to surviving domestic partners has a potentially greater financial impact and more complex legal considerations. Before any proposals move forward in this area, the Government Operations Committee of the City Council could request the City Attorney for a legal analysis and the City Administrative Officer for a financial review of the matter.

## City Departments and Commissions

During the past fiscal year, the City of Los Angeles reported nearly \$2.5 billion in revenues. Almost \$2 billion of this revenue was appropriated to city departments.<sup>55</sup> A list of some departments and a brief summary of their authority shows how departmental services and programs affect local families:<sup>56</sup>

**\* Department of Aging:** plans, coordinates, and manages the city's senior citizen activities.

**\* Building and Safety Department:** enforces all ordinances and laws related to the construction or alteration of homes, apartments, and other buildings, as well as the installation, use and repair of appliances therein; enforces zoning laws.

**\* City Attorney:** prosecutes all misdemeanor cases, including family violence and abuse, and some substance abuse.

**\* Community Development Department:** administers the housing and community block grant, community services block grant, and rent control programs.

**\* Cultural Affairs Department:** sponsors exhibitions and community art events; conducts youth and adult choruses and community sings; sponsors band concerts.

**\* Fire Department:** enforces fire prevention laws; implements a fire prevention program; provides rescue services; extinguishes fires.

**\* City Planning Department:** regulates the use of privately owned property through zoning laws; provides advice and assistance relative to environmental matters.

**\* Police Department:** engages in patrol and prevention of crime; investigates crimes and makes arrests.

**\* Public Works Department:** collects and disposes of household refuse; maintains all sanitation sewers and storm drains; maintains street lighting; maintains streets and sidewalks.

**\* Transportation Department:** develops plans to meet the ground transportation needs of the public; studies parking and traffic problems; controls traffic and pedestrian movement at all intersections; oversees crossing guard services.

**\* Library Department:** purchases, catalogues, maintains, and circulates library materials; provides services at 63 libraries and throughout the city by bookmobiles.

**\* Recreation and Parks Department:** operates parks, beaches, zoo, observatory, travel town, and cultural sites; operates sports, camping, and other recreational programs for youth, seniors, families and individuals.

The responsibility of governing and administering the City of Los Angeles is shared among various participants.<sup>57</sup> Elected officials write laws, set policies, adopt budgets, and hold occasional oversight hearings. Daily implementation of city services and programs is the duty of department heads. Ideally, however, ongoing oversight of government operations should be attended to by appointed city commissioners.

More than 200 appointed commissioners serve on about 45 boards and commissions created by city charter or ordinance. Most of the appointments are made by the Mayor, with approval by the City Council. Although many commissions exercise authority that has a direct or indirect effect on local families, the Task Force has taken a special interest in the work of the following panels:

- \* **Commission on the Status of Women:** promotes the general welfare of women in the community and in the city workforce.<sup>58</sup>
- \* **Human Relations Commission:** promotes intergroup harmony through public hearings, research, education or by recommending legislation or programs.<sup>59</sup>
- \* **Handicapped Access Appeals Commission:** receives complaints, holds hearings, and makes rulings on buildings lacking access for people with disabilities.<sup>60</sup>
- \* **Board of Public Works:** issues permits for filming by media on city-owned property; enforces laws prohibiting nondiscrimination by city contractors.

The Task Force commends the city's Commission on the Status of Women for its efforts to improve the quality of life for women and families in Los Angeles. The Commission has developed and the City Council has approved an excellent "Policy Statement on Women's Issues," to guide the city's legislative programs in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.<sup>61</sup> The Task Force also commends the Women's Commission for its leadership in promoting the extension of family benefits to domestic partners.

The Task Force is aware that the city's Human Relations Commission annually prints and distributes a calendar noting various holidays and observances of interest to constituencies in this multicultural city. The Task Force commends the Commission for choosing "Family Diversity" as the theme for its 1988 Human Relations Calendar. Having studied various aspects of the Commission's operations, the Task Force suggest several modifications in the Commission's operations. In keeping with the Commission's mandate to propose legislation and programs promoting intergroup harmony, the Task Force recommends that the Human Relations Commission develop and annually update a "Policy Statement on Human Relations" for inclusion in the city's legislative policy statements. The Task Force also recommends that the Commission take whatever steps are necessary to insure that its Annual Report is filed with the Mayor and distributed to interested parties in a timely manner. Finally, the Task Force recommends that the Human Relations Commission adopt a plan of action to revitalize its operations. A consultant might be hired to assist the Mayor and the Commission in facilitating such a revitalization program.

The Handicapped Access Appeals Commission was created last year. It will doubtless build upon and augment the work of the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Disabilities. The Task Force commends the

Mayor and the City Council for elevating the access issue to full commission status. The Task Force recommends that the Mayor review the needs of the Advisory Commission on Disabilities, including its budget and staffing, so that it can deal effectively with numerous disability issues that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the newly created Access Appeals Commission. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Task Force also recommends that as soon as possible, the mayor's Advisory Commission be replaced by a commission on disabilities created by ordinance.

The Board of Public Works plays an important role in administering the city and state nondiscrimination laws. Equal opportunity is an important issue in a city with so many minorities and constituencies. The city recently affirmed its commitment to nondiscrimination when it passed an ordinance prohibiting discriminatory membership practices by certain private clubs.<sup>62</sup>

Years ago, the city resolved not to award city funds to vendors or contractors who engage in discriminatory employment practices that violate federal, state, or local nondiscrimination laws. This ordinance is administered by the Board of Public Works. Under the ordinance, as amended in 1975, funds may not be awarded to contractors who discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, or physical handicap.<sup>63</sup> Although other forms of discrimination have been prohibited in subsequent years, the ordinance has remained the same since 1975. Now, however, discrimination on the basis of "medical condition," "marital status," and "sexual orientation" is illegal under state or local laws.<sup>64</sup> If the city "intends to deal only with those contractors who comply with the nondiscriminatory . . . provisions of the laws of United States of America, the State of California, and the City of Los Angeles,"<sup>65</sup> then the Administrative Code should be updated. The Task Force recommends that the City Council amend the Administrative Code provisions dealing with nondiscrimination by city contractors, adding "marital status," "sexual orientation," and "medical condition" to appropriate subdivisions of Section 10.8, Division 10, Chapter 1 of that code. The Task Force also recommends that the City Attorney and the Board of Public Works keep the City Council and the Mayor apprised of any additional categories that should be added if state, federal, or local nondiscrimination laws are augmented in the future.

In addition to its specific comments on these four commissions, the Task Force offers a few additional observations about the commission process in general. With varying degrees of authority, city boards and commissions oversee departmental operations. Some have the authority to approve or reject departmental policies. Others serve in a more limited advisory capacity. Some have substantial budgets and adequate staffing. Others are significantly underbudgeted and understaffed. Most commissioners serve without compensation, receiving token "per diems" to cover expenses in attending meetings.

One critical observer recently suggested the attributes of effective commissions, which she called, "the lifeblood of our government."<sup>66</sup> The City of Los Angeles would benefit by employing the following criteria in any evaluation of the commission system which might be undertaken in the future:<sup>67</sup>

- \* The process of selecting commissioners should be open, with broad based recruitment efforts.

\* Appointees should be selected for their integrity and ability; not for purely political reasons.

\* A limit of two terms should be the rule. With so many qualified people to choose from, more individuals should be given an opportunity to serve.

\* Commissioners should listen to conscientious staff members, should not be puppets of department heads, and should exert independent effort to find out what is really going on within their jurisdiction.

\* Commissioners should be visible in the community, thus encouraging broad citizen participation.

\* Commissions should be adequately budgeted and have adequate and competent staffing.

\* To determine whether a given commission is doing its job, annual reports should be required.

With these criteria in mind, the Task Force on Family Diversity recommends that the Mayor and the City Council conduct a thorough review of the city's commission process for the purpose of making the commissions more representative and effective. The Task Force notes that some constituencies are underrepresented.<sup>68</sup> It is recommended that the Mayor review the representativeness of current city commissioners and correct any gross imbalances with the next set of scheduled vacancies in June, 1988.

Although this report touches upon many of the major areas of concern to diverse family groups in Los Angeles, the Task Force on Family Diversity is fully aware that many other important areas have not been addressed. It should be apparent that the study of changing family demographics and problems should be an ongoing process for the City of Los Angeles. Unfortunately, there is no existing city agency dealing with family issues on a holistic basis. Los Angeles families deserve more attention, and the City Council, the Mayor, and city departments need ongoing advice related to family concerns. To fulfill this important function, the Task Force on Family Diversity recommends that the City Council and the Mayor establish a Commission on Family Diversity to begin operating in budget year 1989-90. This report, and its background documents, could serve as a foundation for the initial operations of such a commission.

In the interim, the Task Force recommends that the Mayor direct all department managers and all commission presidents to review the report of the Task Force on Family Diversity so that they are aware of current family demographics and needs and can therefore continue to improve policies, programs and services affecting local families.

## **CITY GOVERNMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Employee Benefits**

98. The Task Force recommends that the City Council and the Mayor continue to press Congress, the California Legislature and the Industrial Welfare Commission to increase the minimum wage for all workers to \$5.01 per hour in 1989.

99. The Task Force recommends that the City Council adopt the child support payment deduction program that has been proposed by Councilwoman Ruth Galanter and Controller Rick Tuttle.

100. The Task Force recommends that the City Council give approval to the Personnel Department to move forward with the implementation phase of the proposed flexible benefits program. The Task Force also recommends that the City Council resolve to eliminate marital status discrimination in the distribution of benefits pursuant to its benefits programs.

101. The Task Force recommends that any plan extending child care benefits to employees should be expanded to include elder care, in essence, making both "dependent care" benefits.

102. The Task Force recommends that the Mayor issue an executive order directing the Personnel Department to review current city personnel practices and authorizing it to take whatever steps are necessary, including meeting and conferring with employee groups, to modify and enhance the city's role as a model employer in the area of dependent care, flexible work schedules, expanded maternity and paternity leave, and the use of leaves to care for elderly dependent relatives. Additionally, the Mayor should direct Project Restore, which is presently working to restore City Hall, to study the feasibility of including an on-site dependent care center in its restoration plans.

103. The Task Force recommends that the city contract with an outside agency to establish an Employee Assistance Program that would provide employees with confidential counseling on a variety of matters, including substance abuse, relationship problems, retirement planning, financial investing, and dependent care.

104. The Task Force recommends that the City Council amend the City Administrative Code to include the term "domestic partner" in the list of "immediate family" relationships for which an employee is entitled to take family sick leave and bereavement leave. The following definition of "domestic partner" should be adopted, and the city's Personnel Department should be authorized to establish appropriate procedures to verify the domestic partnership status of employees who claim eligibility for sick leave or bereavement leave:

Domestic partners are two persons who declare that:

- (1) They currently reside in the same household, and have been so residing for the previous 12 months.
- (2) They share the common necessities of life.
- (3) They have a mutual obligation of support, and are each other's sole domestic partner.
- (4) They are both over 18 years of age and are competent to contract.
- (5) Neither partner is married.
- (6) Neither partner is related by blood to the other.
- (7) They agree to notify the appropriate agency within 30 days if any of the above facts change.

## Departments and Commissions

105. The Task Force recommends that the following actions be taken in connection with the city's Human Relations Commission:

(a) In keeping with the Commission's mandate to propose legislation and programs promoting intergroup harmony, the Commission should develop and annually update a "Policy Statement on Human Relations" for inclusion in the city's legislative policy statements.

(b) The Commission should take whatever administrative action is necessary to insure that its Annual Report is filed with the Mayor and distributed to interested parties in a timely manner.

(c) The Commission should adopt a plan of action of revitalize its operations. A consultant might be hired to assist the Mayor and the Commission in facilitating such a revitalization program.

106. The Task Force recommends that the Mayor review the needs of the Advisory Commission on Disabilities. Pending the creation by ordinance of a full Commission on Disabilities, the Advisory Commission needs a budget and staff members of its own so that it can effectively deal with numerous disability issues which do not fall within the jurisdiction of the newly created Access Appeals Commission.

107. The Task Force recommends that the City Council amend the Administrative Code provisions dealing with nondiscrimination by city contractors, adding "marital status," "sexual orientation," and "medical condition" to appropriate subdivisions of Section 10.8, Division 10, Chapter 1 of that code. It is further recommended that the City Attorney and the Board of Public Works keep the City Council and the Mayor apprised of any additional categories which should be added as state, federal, and local nondiscrimination laws may be augmented in the future.

108. The Task Force recommends that the Mayor and the City Council conduct a thorough review of the appointment process and operations of the city's commissions, for the purpose of making the commissions more representative and effective.

109. The Task Force recommends that the City Council and the Mayor establish a Commission on Family Diversity to begin operating in budget year 1989-90. This report, and its background documents, will serve as a foundation for the initial operations of a Family Diversity Commission.

110. The Task Force recommends that the Mayor direct all department managers and all commission presidents to review the report of the Task Force on Family Diversity so that they are aware of current family demographics and needs and therefore can improve policies, programs and services affecting local families.

## City Government: Notes

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Henry Hurd, Employee Benefits Manager, Personnel Department, City of Los Angeles.

<sup>2</sup> "Wage Hike Endorsed," *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Weinstein, Henry, "Mahony and Kennedy Lead Rally for Hike in Basic Wage," *Los Angeles Times*, July 13, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> "Legislative Outlook," *Alert*, California Chamber of Commerce, July 10, 1987.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> "L.A. Increases Minimum Wage for City Workers," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, January 29, 1988.

<sup>7</sup> "L.A. Will Gain 800,000 Jobs by Year 2000," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, September 21, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Bernstein, Harry, "Work in the Year 2000," *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> West, Steven, "Traffic Congestion Threatens to Stall the Economic Engine," *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Christensen, Kathleen, *Women and Home-Based Work: The Unspoken Contract* (Henry Holt, 1987).

<sup>12</sup> Hertz, Rosanna, *More Equal Than Others: Women and Men in Dual-Career Marriages* (University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>13</sup> Freudenheim, Milt, "Help in Caring for the Elderly," *New York Times*, July 1, 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Sackett, Kacy, "L.A. to Consider Child Support Plan," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, November 24, 1987.

<sup>15</sup> City of Los Angeles, "Employee Benefits Survey," administered by Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby, an independent consulting firm hired by the City Council. Results reported in a memorandum dated January 28, 1988, from Keith Comrie, City Administrative Officer, to Mayor Tom Bradley.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; The number of employees with domestic partners may be somewhat higher than 5%. A recent survey by the Commission on the Status of Women estimated that 11% of city employees lived with domestic partners. The actual number probably lies between these two figures.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Ross, David, "Securing Benefits for the Domestic Partners of Los Angeles City Employees," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part Two*, p. S-564; Bautista, Rummell, "One-Person Households," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part Two*, p. S-619; Link, David, "Status of Gay and Lesbian Couples," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part Two*, p. S-832; Green, Matthew, "Defining Family," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part Two*, p. S-600.

<sup>19</sup> Harris, Charles, "Feasibility Study: Flexible Benefits for City Employees," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 122; Achtenberg, Roberta, "Gay and Lesbian Couples and Families," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 253; Nordquist, Joyce, and Weinberger, William, "Employee Benefits for Domestic Partners," *Public Hearing Transcript*, p. 185.

<sup>20</sup> The remainder of this section on "Flexible Benefits" is taken from the team report: Michelle Buehler, Diane Goodman, Katherine J. Hamilton, "Report on Governmental Employee Benefits," *Report of the Task Force on Family Diversity: Supplement — Part One*, p. S-450.

<sup>21</sup> Goodman, Isidore, "An Overview of Employee Benefit Plans," *Pension Plan Guide, No. 395*, part II (Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 10-22-86).

<sup>22</sup> Goodman, Isidore, "The Compensation Package," *Pension Plan Guide, No 354*, part II, (Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 1-8-82).

<sup>23</sup> Mamorsky, Jeffrey, *Employee Benefits Handbook* (Warren, Gorham & Lamong, 1987).

<sup>24</sup> *In re Marriage of Fithian* (1974) 10 Cal.3d 592, 596.

<sup>25</sup> Klein, James P., "Tax Effective Total Compensation," *Tax Law & Practice Course Handbook Series Number 237*, p. 7. (Practicing Law Institute, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Willborn, Steven L., *A Comparable Worth Primer* (Lexington Books, 1986).

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Berne, Suzanne, "Elder Care: *The Issue of the 21st Century*," *Los Angeles Downtown News*, Vol. 16, No. 35 (August 24, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> In a survey of the city's workforce conducted last year by the Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women, 11% of about 6,000 respondents reported that they lived with a domestic partner.

<sup>31</sup> Willborn, *supra*, note 27, at p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Klein, *supra*, note 25, at pp. 11-12.

<sup>33</sup> *Health and Dental Care Program*, Employee Benefits Office, Personnel Department, September 1, 1986, pp. 1, 22.

<sup>34</sup> City Charter, Section 509.

<sup>35</sup> Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 4.245.

<sup>36</sup> Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 4.127.

<sup>37</sup> Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 4.127.1.

<sup>38</sup> Health and Dental Care Program, *supra*, note 33, at pp. 19, 22.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 4.127.

<sup>42</sup> Los Angeles Administrative Code, Section 4.127.1.

<sup>43</sup> City Charter, Section 508.2.

<sup>44</sup> Berne, *supra*, note 29.

<sup>45</sup> Jackson, Dennis, "Dependent Care in the City of Los Angeles," Los Angeles City Department of Aging.

<sup>46</sup> Friedman, Dana, "Eldercare: The Employee Benefit of the 1990s," *Across the Board*, p. 46 (June, 1986).

<sup>47</sup> Testimony of Charles Harris, *supra*, note 19.

<sup>48</sup> Comrie, *supra*, note 15.

<sup>49</sup> The survey by the Personnel Department estimated about 5%; the Women's Commission survey estimated about 11%. The Task Force estimate of 8% is the average of these two figures.

<sup>50</sup> See previous chapter on Domestic Partnership Families.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Los Angeles Administrative Code Sections 4.127 and 4.127.1.

<sup>53</sup> Ross, *supra*, note 18; Link, *supra*, note 18.

<sup>54</sup> Hurd, *supra*, note 1.

<sup>55</sup> "Budget for the City of Los Angeles for Fiscal Year 1987-88," as proposed by Mayor Tom Bradley.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Harris, Ellen, "Government's Lifeblood: Commissions with Clout," *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1987.

<sup>58</sup> "Detail of Departmental Programs with Financial Summaries," Supplement to the 1987-88 Proposed Budget.

<sup>59</sup> Administrative Code, Div. 22, ch. 6, Sec. 22.94.

<sup>60</sup> City Council File No. C.F. 86-1757; "Access Panel for Disabled," *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1987.

<sup>61</sup> "1987-88 Legislative Policy Statements," prepared by the Chief Legislative Analyst.

<sup>62</sup> City Council File No. 87-0288, adding Article 5.9 to Chapter IV of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

<sup>63</sup> Los Angeles Municipal Code, Div. 10, Ch. 1, Art. I, Section 10.8.2.

<sup>64</sup> Government Code Section 12940; Labor Code Sections 1101, 1102; 69 *Cal. Atty. Gen. Op.* 80 (1986); Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 49.70, et seq.

<sup>65</sup> Los Angeles Municipal Code, Div. 10, ch. 1, Art. I, Section 10.8.

<sup>66</sup> Harris, *supra*, note 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> The Task Force is not advocating a rigid quota system in the

appointment process. However, it has come to the attention of the Task Force that there are only four known gay or lesbian commissioners and only a handful of disabled commissioners presently serving on boards and commissions created by charter or ordinance. Each of these constituencies constitute from 10 to 15 percent of the local population. This imbalance could be corrected when the Mayor and the City Council fill vacancies scheduled for June, 1988.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
(Per Implementing Agency/Official)

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## **APPENDIX E**

### **Task Force on Family Diversity Mandate**

**WHEREAS, the family, as an institution, has played and continues to play an important role in the development of our city, state, and nation; and**

**WHEREAS, "family" is a broad and expansive concept, capable of encompassing a wide range of committed relationships; and**

**WHEREAS, most individuals, in furtherance of their inalienable rights to life, liberty, privacy, and pursuit of happiness, have formed and continue to form family relationships; and**

**WHEREAS, our city is rich in family diversity; and**

**WHEREAS, government should encourage the formation and development of family relationships; and**

**WHEREAS, government itself should not foster discrimination against families, nor should it tolerate unfair private discrimination against families; and**

**WHEREAS, in furtherance of our commitment to family life and individual freedom, the City of Los Angeles and its affiliated political entities should adopt reasonable measures to address the legitimate needs of families; and**

**WHEREAS, government authority to remedy family problems is vested in various levels and branches of government;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Los Angeles City Councilman Michael Woo, by virtue of the power vested in me as a member of the Los Angeles City Council and as Chairman of the City Council's Intergovernmental Relations Committee, do hereby convene a TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY:**

- 1. Said Task Force shall consist of two co-chairs and up to 38 other members appointed by me.**
- 2. The co-chairs and members shall serve without compensation.**
- 3. The Task Force shall study the nature and extent of family diversity in the City of Los Angeles and shall investigate any evident problems experienced by variable family groups, such as single-parent families, unmarried couples, immigrant families, gay or lesbian couples, or families with senior or disabled members.**
- 4. The Task Force shall issue a final report by April, 1988, documenting its findings, noting demographic and legal trends, and making recommendations for legislative, administrative, educational, or other appropriate actions which should be undertaken within the public or private sectors to address the special problems of families in Los Angeles.**

**Dated: April 9, 1986**

***COUNCILMAN MICHAEL WOO***

**(Rev. 8-1-86/8-3-87)**