

## Los Angeles Times

Friday, May 20, 1988

# Changes in Family Life Require New Laws, Policies, Panel Says

By KEVIN RODERICK, *Times Staff Writer*

Family life in Los Angeles has changed so much that many laws and policies should be changed to acknowledge the new order, a task force of citizens recommended Thursday to Mayor Tom Bradley and the City Council.

For instance, with so many people in Los Angeles not married, the City Council and other arms of government should give some legal "domestic partner" status to unmarried couples and forbid consumer discounts that aim only at married people, the Task Force on Family Diversity report said.

The advisory-only group, which was formed by City Councilman Mike Woo, includes representatives from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, Pacific Bell and GTE California, and the MECLA Foundation, a gay-oriented organization. The report issued Wednesday included more than 100 recommendations.

Woo embraced the concept of unmarried couples, including gay couples, being given limited domestic

partner status and announced Wednesday that he would seek a change in the personnel practices that govern Los Angeles city employees.

He said employees who are not married but who have established a household with someone should be given the same family sick and bereavement leave as married couples. Woo said he planned to introduce the measure in the City Council today.

### Non-Traditional Living Arrangements

The report seeks to make the point that most people in Los Angeles have a living arrangement that is other than the traditional married couple with children. About 22% of households are married couples with no children, 11% of households include a single parent; 21% include an elderly person and more than 31% of households consist of a single person living alone, the report said.

A great need exists for child care, the report said,

and city officials can help by helping city workers with child care and giving preference on contracts to firms that provide child care for their own employees. Developers should also be allowed to build bigger buildings as an enticement to provide child-care facilities, the report said.

In a city with a population estimated at 3.5 million, the report said, about 500,000 have some disability and another 200,000 are gay men or lesbians. Both the disabled and gay communities are subject to discriminatory laws and practices that should be changed, the report said.

The city should require developers to provide better handicapped access in their buildings, and rules should be changed to ensure that gay and other unmarried couples are allowed to visit in hospitals.

# The Los Angeles Daily Journal

Thursday, October 6, 1988

## Spouse Benefits Extended to 'Domestic Partners'

By G.M. BUSH

Despite warnings of grave social costs, the Los Angeles City Council voted Wednesday to include "domestic partners" in the "immediate family" category under which city employees are granted bereavement and sick leave.

Under the plan, a domestic partner could be a close friend, a common-law spouse or a homosexual lover. To qualify, a confidential affidavit would be filed with the city declaring the person's identity.

Councilman Ernani Bernardi strongly objected to the measure, which he characterized as a "gay ordinance."

After a discussion of potential cost of the proposal, he said money is not the issue, but rather that "it goes beyond what is considered to be the normal relationship between a male and a female."

"This is a major change," he said. "It's the social costs; that's my problem."

The council, however, voted 11-2 in favor of the proposal. The concept will be presented to employee unions in contract talks.

The length of a potential leave would depend on the employee's particular job and Memorandum of Understanding contract. City law allows up to five days off for an illness of a family member and three days bereavement leave.

Last year, an Employee Benefits Survey conducted by the city found that approximately 4.2 percent, or 840, of the city's 20,000 civilian em-

ployees live with a domestic partner.

The proposal adopted by the council was supported by the two-person majority of the council's Governmental Operations Committee: Councilman Michael Woo, the committee chairman, and Councilwoman Gloria Molina.

Their majority report to the full council said current employee benefit plans were "designed in the 1960s for the typical family of a working husband, non-working wife, and two or more dependent children."

Now, however, fewer than 10 percent of the workforce fits this model. "The majority of workers today are single, two-income couples, singles with dependents, and older employees. 'One size fits all' when applied to benefit plans, no longer best fits the needs of today's employees," the report stated.

### Feasibility Study

The report was based in part on a feasibility study conducted by the Personnel Department that included a review of domestic partnership ordinances already adopted by the cities of Berkeley and West Hollywood and the Berkeley Unified School District. Proposals now under review in San Francisco and Madison, Wisc., also were studied.

The committee's third member, Councilwoman Joan Milke Flores, opposed the plan, noting that the city administrative officer had reported that the inclusion of domestic partners in employee benefits would be seen as a move toward incorporating them in health, dental, insurance and retirement benefits.

She also cited the high cost of the program, again relying on data from the CAO, which concluded that extending bereavement and sick leave benefits to domestic partners would cost about \$2.3 million annually.

Councilman Joel Wachs challenged this figure, saying employees would not receive any additional time off.

Granting health benefits to domestic partners would cost the city anywhere from \$3.9 million to \$5.2 million a year, Flores said.

When the matter came before the committee for consideration, those who testified said they planned to seek extension of other benefits to domestic partners in the future, she said.

Instead of expanding sick and bereavement leave, the council should consider a "generic time-off" plan "to be used by any employee for any purpose without justification," she said, calling this approach "less complicated and more equitable."

Woo called this proposal "potentially much more expensive to the city."

Flores strongly objected to the confidential affidavits that would be needed to validate domestic partner relationships. "Although the City Attorney has reported that the City will probably not incur any liability through this process, it is clearly not within the purview of local governments to validate personal relationships," she said in her minority report.

The proposal was one of 110 recommendations of the Task Force on Family Diversity in a report issued in May, "Strengthening Families: A Model for Community Action."

The 37-member blue-ribbon task force was convened by Woo and included representatives of Los Angeles' legal, religious, educational and business communities. Parents, students and governmental employees also were included.

The report was written by attorney Thomas F. Coleman, the panel's principal consultant.

# Study finds LA families aren't what they used to be

**BY JULIE JASKOL**

The report is out on family diversity in Los Angeles, and Ward and June Cleaver don't crop up a lot. In fact, only about one in five Los Angeles households consists of Mom, Dad, and children, and in more than half of those households, Mom and Dad both work outside the home.

Households in LA are more likely to contain only one parent, or two unmarried adults living together, or married couples without children, or an extended family, including elderly relatives. And nearly one third of the city's households consist of a single person living alone.

These are the findings of a two-

year study conducted by the Task Force on Family Diversity, convened by Councilman Mike Woo to study how the family has changed, and how the city can meet families' varying needs. "The American family has changed dramatically from the days of the stereotypical family with two parents and two kids," says Woo. "City policies need to reflect that change."

The report recommends 110 ways the city can respond to today's families, including gay or heterosexual unmarried couples, single-parent families, immigrant families, homeless families, and families that include disabled and elderly

members. Recommendations address child care, housing, health insurance, education, family violence, AIDS, gangs, teen pregnancy, gay and lesbian youth, suicide, and a whole host of other issues that affect family life in LA today.

Specifically, the task force recommends extending sick and bereavement leave for domestic partners, gay or non-gay, who share the same household and mutual obligation of support. It suggests flexible work hours for city employees and expanded city support for child care. It calls for flexible insurance benefits and an end to insurance discrimination against non-married couples. It recommends the city encourage affordable family housing, and the Los Angeles Unified School District expand its controversial Project X to provide counseling to gay and lesbian youths on all high school campuses.

"Family life in Los Angeles is healthy and diverse, but under enormous stress," says Christopher McCauley, senior consumer affairs representative for Southern California Gas Company and the task force co-chair, citing violence, lack of affordable housing, racial tension, and unresponsive employee benefits among those stresses. To help alleviate them, he calls on the city to establish a permanent commission on family diversity and to require a "Family Impact Statement," much like an Environmental Impact Statement, to study the effects of city policies on families.

As an initial response to the task force report, Woo scheduled a special Governmental Operations Committee meeting last week to discuss sick and bereavement leave for domestic partners. The task force

report will also be forwarded to the mayor's office, the City Council, and other city agencies for further action and discussion on its

recommendations.

"The traditional family definition no longer applies to at least 90 percent of our work force," says Woo,

"yet our policies are designed to deal with a reality that no longer exists. We're asking LA to deal more realistically with families."

## Plan gives city workers leave to care for 'domestic partners'

By Gerald Floyd  
Herald Examiner staff writer

A City Council panel yesterday approved a far-reaching plan that would allow gay and unmarried city employees to take time off from work when their "domestic partners" become sick or die.

The proposal, which still needs the full City Council's approval, could make Los Angeles the first large U.S. city to adopt such a plan.

Berkeley and West Hollywood are the only California cities that have a similar policy. San Francisco is currently examining a proposal.

Less than 10 percent of the city's 40,000-plus work force would be affected if the plan were approved, said Keith Comrie, city administrative officer. The program would also cost the city about \$2.3 million annually in "soft dollars" — days not worked because of sick or bereavement leave, said Jerry Selmer, assistant city administrative officer.

The Governmental Operations

Committee voted 2-1 in favor of the proposal. Council members Michael Woo and Gloria Molina were in the majority; Joan Milke Flores was opposed.

The proposal was one of many recommended by a 35-member task force after it concluded a study on family diversity in Los Angeles. It suggested that the city extend its definition of a family to include "domestic partners."

Domestic partners are defined as two persons 18 years or older who have resided in the same household for at least a year, have mutual obligations of support and share the common necessities of life and are not married, or related by blood.

"Woo feels times have changed," said Bill Chandler, spokesman for the councilman. "We no longer live in a city where the nuclear family is the male, female and two kids."

"They have very different needs," he said.

If the full City Council approves the proposal, it must then be negotiated with various unions representing city employees.

# L.A. Domestic Partner Law Ready For City Council Action

By Jeff Lawrence  
For Update

WEST HOLLYWOOD — Los Angeles City Councilmember Mike Woo last week called for Gays and Lesbians throughout the city to lobby the Los Angeles City Council in favor of recommendations of the City Task Force on Family Diversity.

Speaking at a meeting of the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian and Gay Rights Chapter here on July 26, Woo specifically asked members to lobby for a proposal to extend sick leave and bereavement leave to city employees with domestic partners. This will be the first of the task force's recommendations to be put forward to the council.

The proposal would allow city workers to take time off to care for domestic partners who are sick or in the case of a domestic partner's death, as with spouses and children. Tom Coleman, a Los Angeles attorney who served as principal consultant to the task force, said the City Administrative Officer and Personnel Department studied the proposal and its cost was estimated at \$2.3 million — in

time off for workers, not cash out of the city's coffers.

The council's Government Operations Committee, chaired by Woo, recently passed the proposal 2-1, and Woo can now set a date to put it before the full council for a vote. But he said he wants to be assured of overwhelming support in the council before asking for a

vote, probably sometime in the fall.

Gays and Lesbians from all areas of the city should contact their city councilmembers to demonstrate that support for the plan goes beyond Silver Lake and Hollywood, he said. Woo suggested citizens call his office for fact sheets and study the issue first, and then make appointments

to meet alone or in groups with their local council members.

Woo said the task force's report, released on May 21, after two and a half years of organization, research, and testimony, is aimed at persuading government to recognize changes in the traditional family and develop policies to reflect

Turn to **PARTNERS**, Page A-6

## PARTNERS

Continued From Front Page

those changes. Its 110 recommendations to national, state, county, and city government cover a broad range of concerns of single-parent families, multi-generational families, gay couples, and other so-called non-traditional families.

Much of the focus is on Gay and Lesbian concerns. Forty percent of the task force's members were Gay or Lesbian, and 38 of its recommendations address the community's issues.

These recommendations make up "a very comprehensive agenda for Gay and Lesbian rights," Coleman said. The agenda goes beyond individual rights to focus on relationships and economic concerns, which he sees as the Gay Rights issues of the next decade.

Among the task force's recommendations are proposals for government action against lifestyle discrimination in insurance, educational programs to combat homophobia, and investigation of hate crimes against minorities.

The report contains a variety of proposals concerning discrimination against unmarried couples — in housing, in discounts given by businesses, in government programs and benefits, in regulations concerning domestic violence, and in other areas.

Coleman said the task force built upon legal precedent which says that household families not related by blood or marriage are legally traditional families. They sought to fill a gap in current laws to extend protections to these families.

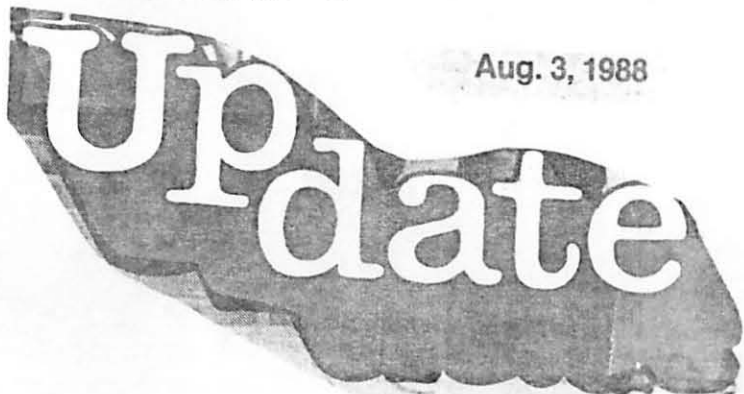
"We're not trying to legalize same-sex marriages," Coleman said, "just recognize them" as a type of family.

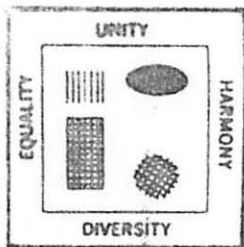
The group put forth a definition for domestic partnerships. To qualify as domestic partnerships under the task force's proposals, such as the sick leave plan, household members would have to declare that they share the necessities of life, among other things. But in most legal procedures, domestic partners would not have to give proof of their status, just as legally married couples are rarely called upon to prove they are married.

Woo and Coleman both expressed confidence that many of the proposals in the report, drafted by a diverse panel reflecting different groups, would win broad support and eventually be acted upon at different government levels.

Coleman said they pursued the sick leave proposal first because of its comparatively low cost and because it has a relatively good chance of being enacted.

Aug. 3, 1988





# THE COMMUNITY REPORTER

4034 Buckingham Rd., Suite 212

Los Angeles, CA 90008

Phone: (213) 295-2607

Community Relations Conference of Southern California

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Kenneth R. Brown

August 1988

## CRCSC MONTHLY COMMUNICATION FORUM

Tuesday, August 2, 1988  
12 Noon to 2:00pm  
at U T L A  
2511 W. Third Street  
(two blocks east of Rampart)

Main Program Feature:  
"Protecting the Civil Rights  
of Families in Los Angeles"

Guest Speakers:  
Christopher McCauley,  
member, Los Angeles City  
Commission on Human Relations  
and  
Thomas F. Coleman  
member, California Legislature's  
Joint Select Task Force  
on the Changing Family

No Luncheon Provided, bring a bag  
lunch, beverage will be  
available.

Extra Special Guests: Friendship  
Day Camp Students.

## CAN THE FAMILY SURVIVE?

On May 19, 1988, the long awaited Final Report of the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity, was published. This massive, four volume, citizen's effort, is the most comprehensive study of contemporary family life ever attempted by a major American city.

CRCSC Board member, Chris McCauley, co-chaired this two year effort with Dr. Nora Baladerian. Thomas F. Coleman, an attorney, who served on the Attorney General's Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious and Minority Violence, authored the Final Report. Both Chris and Tom will be present at our August 2nd Luncheon Forum to summarize this historic report; including a discussion of ways in which society, laws and public policy may even be fostering discrimination against families. Chris and Tom will also present proposals on ways to improve family life and human rights education in the public schools.

Please join us, to hear this discussion of family diversity based on this progressive study.

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## Media Currents

# Landmark Report on Families

by G. Jay Westbrook

**L**os Angeles City Councilperson Michael Woo is responsible for the largest study of families ever conducted by a municipal government. Two years ago, he created and convened the Task Force on Family Diversity, which was charged with conducting a study of both traditional and nontraditional families: exploring their problems; identifying policies and programs that effectively address those problems; and finding remedies for those problems that had not been addressed or were inadequately addressed.

Last spring, the Task Force concluded its efforts with a four-volume report that is available to the public.

The Task Force approached its job with a three-pronged attack. Testimony was collected at public hearings from many recognized experts (ASA representatives accounted for almost 4 percent of the total testimony) as well as from lay persons in the community. Research and policy papers were prepared on 17 diverse topics ranging from senior issues to domestic violence. Task Force members were assigned to one of 16 different research teams, each of which explored a different aspect of the family such as legal definitions of family, demographics, housing.

The four-volume report, entitled "Strengthening Families: A Model for Community Action," presents not only a wealth of factual and statistical data, it also commends policies and programs which, if enacted, would reduce or eliminate those barriers that impede family integrity, solidarity, and optimal functioning. Although the report does not focus solely on the elderly, it mirrors a trend to move issues concerning the elderly from the "aging arena" to the "family arena." As such, it is necessary reading for the gerontological community.

Copies of the final report of the Task Force on Family Diversity are available for \$10 from Family Diversity Project, Box 65756, Los Angeles, CA 90065 (make checks payable to ISHR). The three other volumes (student papers, research team findings, and public hearing transcripts) are also available at a cost of \$10 each.

*G. Jay Westbrook, ASA's Media Coordinator, is Associate Research Director & Director of Information Services at Shriners Hospital, an instructor at UCLA Extension, and a private consultant in Los Angeles.*

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# MECLA

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Summer, 1988

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## Family Diversity Task Force Completes Report

On May 19, Councilman Mike Woo held a reception for the publication of the report by the Task Force on Family Diversity, which he appointed.

The Task Force, Co-Chaired by Chris McCauley and Nora Baladerian, with special assistance from Thomas Coleman, presents recommendations that:

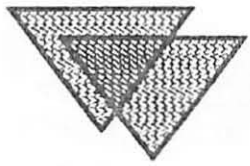
- The City should add "domestic partner" to the list of "immediate family" relationships so that partners can receive sick and bereavement leave.
- Expanding the Project 10 Counseling program in the L.A. Unified School District.
- Stopping acts of abuse against seniors



Other issues discussed in the report include: child care, housing, homelessness, care for disabled persons, and immigrant families.

Diane Himes, MECLA Co-Chair, received a commendation from Councilmembers Woo and Joel Wachs and City Controller Rick Tuttle for her participation on the 38 member Task Force. Lynn Shepodd received an award acknowledging MECLA Foundation's \$5,000 grant which allowed for completion of the report.





# PARTNERS

The Newsletter For Gay & Lesbian Couples

ISSN 0891-1738

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## BOOST TO GAY L. A. FAMILIES

Lesbian and gay couples in Los Angeles will live better if the recommendations of that city's Task Force on Family Diversity are implemented. Two years in the making, the task force's landmark report contains more than 35 proposals affecting lesbian and gay family issues.

The task force was convened by City Councilman Michael Woo, who also is leading efforts to implement the recommendations. The City Council will vote later this summer on one of the proposals; a measure that would allow city employees to take sick and bereavement leave on behalf of their domestic partners.

Gay and lesbian family issues were but part of the task force agenda. Also considered were education, child care, domestic violence, and families with elders and disabled members.

The final report issued by the community-based task force is remarkable for its breadth, clarity and persuasive force.

The task force's principal consultant, and principal author of the final report, was Los Angeles attorney Thomas F. Coleman. Coleman teaches domestic partner rights at the University of Southern California Law Center.



For a copy of the task force's *Final Report*, send \$10 to the Institute for the Study of Human Resources, Family Diversity Project, Box 65756, Los Angeles, CA 90065, or call 213-258-8955. Also available, for \$10 each, are three supplements, all of which contain substantial references to gay and lesbian families: reports of task force teams, student research papers, and a transcript of public hearings.

discrimination legislation.

The estate was heavily guarded by Secret Service personnel, with Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department deputies arriving after it became ap-

parent that the demonstrators were not going to leave as requested.

By the time the uniformed officers arrived however, most of

the guests had already arrived to chants of ACT UP.

The protesters did not have any type of permit for the Please see ACT UP, Page 18

## Domestic Partner Rights Proposed

by Richard Labonte

Los Angeles has taken the first step toward granting domestic-partner rights to gay men, lesbians and other unmarried city employees.

The governmental operations committee of the city council voted June 1 to add "domestic partners" to the list of immediate family members eligible for sick leave and bereavement leave.

Councilman Michael Woo, who heads the committee, had also established a task force on family diversity which recently recommended implementation of domestic-partner legislation, among dozens of other proposals for dealing with the reality of new forms of families in the 1980s.

"The American family has changed dramatically from the days of the stereotypical family with two parents and two kids," Woo said in a statement after the committee's 2-1 vote.

"The vote today shows that the city will assure that our policies reflect that change."

Woo's motion, among the first to come out of the task

force's many proposals, was supported by Gloria Molina and opposed by Joan Milke Flores. It is due to be considered by the full council in mid-June.

Three small California cities — West Hollywood, Santa Cruz and Berkeley — have already adopted domestic partnership legislation, which has also been considered but not adopted by San Francisco.

Los Angeles would be the first major United States city with such a program, which extends to unmarried couples — the highest-profile of which are lesbian or gay couples — the municipal benefits accorded to married couples, such as time off when a partner is ill, or bereavement leave when a partner dies.

Under the proposal, domestic partners are defined as two persons 18 years or older who have shared a household for at least one year, have mutual obligations of support, share the common necessities of life and are not related by marriage or blood.

The city estimates that about 4,000 of its workforce of 40,000 would be affected by the plan, and that the program would cost about \$2 million — not in



Councilman Michael Woo

money taken out of the budget, but rather in time potentially lost from paid days not worked.

The proposal affects only city employees, although Woo's task force hopes the city will be setting an example for the private sector.

Photo

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The News

June 10, 1983

# L.A. Takes First Steps To Domestic Partnership Law

by Chris Uszler

Los Angeles City Councilmember Michael Woo introduced domestic partnership legislation for city employees before the Government Operations Committee on May 20, just two days after Woo's Task Force On Family Diversity recommended the city take such an action in its report.

The task force, which was set up by Woo over a year ago and included a number of openly gay men and lesbians, issued a lengthy report on May 18, which contained nearly 100 recommendations of ways city government could be more responsive to the needs of contemporary families and individuals involved in alternative living arrangements.

According to Woo press deputy, Bill Chandler, the Government Operations Committee, which is comprised of Woo and Councilmembers Gloria Molina and Joan Milke Flores, will send the domestic partnership proposal to the



Photo: Leslie Hall

Michael Woo

full council with a positive recommendation.

Chandler said only Milke Flores is thought to have reservations about the proposal.

## Family Study Unveiled

On May 19, Los Angeles Councilman Michael Woo presented the results of a two-year study focusing on the problems faced by single-parent families, gay and lesbian couples, and families with seniors and disabled persons.

"The American family has changed dramatically from the days of the stereotypical family with two parents and two kids. City policies need to reflect that change," Woo said.

The Personnel Department reported that current city benefit programs were designed in the 1960s for the "typical" family of a working husband, non-working wife, and two or more dependent children. "Less than 10 percent of today's work force fit that model," Woo said.

Woo created the 35-member Task Force on Family Diversity in April, 1986, to deal with this specific issue. "The mandate of the Task Force was clear: Describe what can government agencies and public sector do to help the changing families within the city, such as single-parent families, gay and lesbian couples, extended families with seniors or disabled persons, and immigrant families," Woo said.

The report's specific recommendations included providing sick and bereavement leave for domestic partners, expanding Project 10 counseling in Los Angeles schools, allowing flexible work hours, creating a city Task Force on Elder Abuse, and increasing family housing by creating local nonprofit housing corporations.

Contributions from organizations and companies including GTE California, Pacific Bell, MECLA Foundation, LEDLER Foundation, Richard Dennis and Bishop Oliver B. Garver Jr. of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles made the report possible.

Copies of the report were forwarded to the City Council and Mayor Tom Bradley for review and possible action.

# FRONTIERS

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 3

ISSUED BI-WEEKLY

JUNE 1—JUNE 18, 1988

## Family Diversity Study

# A Start Toward Domestic Partnership

by Don L. Volk

**R**esults of a two-year study of the changing structure of families within the City of Los Angeles, City Councilman Michael Woo held a special meeting of the Government Operations Committee on Friday, May 20, to determine if the city could include domestic partners for sick and bereavement leave benefits.

Bill Chandler, press aide to Woo, told *Frontiers* that the meeting was "held to get information about sick and bereavement leave benefits for domestic partners from the personnel department.

"The personnel department said they didn't see a problem with a new policy including domestic partners, but Councilwoman Joan Milke Flores had questions about the economic impact of the program," said Chandler.

He added, however, that the Government Operations Committee will discuss the policy again and will probably submit a positive recommendation to the full council by mid-June. Both Woo and Councilwoman Gloria Molina favor such a policy.

The domestic partner provision was part of a 121-page report "Strengthening

Families: A Model for Community Action," that was prepared by the 35-member Task Force on Family Diversity.

Woo created that task force in April, 1986, to study the changing structure of families within the city. The group focused on problems facing single-parent families, gay and lesbian couples, and families with seniors and disabled persons.

Basically, the study indicates that family life in Los Angeles "is healthy and diverse, but under enormous stress." It also found that current city benefit programs were "designed in the 1960s for the 'typical' family of a working husband, non-working wife, and two or more dependent children."

At a press conference announcing the report, Woo said, "Less than 10 percent of today's work force fit that model."

A number of gays and lesbians worked on the final report to help address issues of concern to the community. Among the 110 recommendations included in the report:

- Retain a research organization to develop reliable estimates of gay/lesbian adult residents;
- Eliminate marital status discrimination in the administration of benefits programs;
- Provide for sick and bereavement leave for domestic partners;
- Convene a task force on gay/lesbian family violence;
- Convene committee to develop plans to expand school district programs dealing with homosexuality;
- Sponsor seminars on AIDS.

Major financial benefactors for the public/private study include the Municipal Elections Committee of Los Angeles Foundation, Pacific Bell, the Ledler Foundation, GTE California, Richard Dennis, and the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.



**PARENTS & FRIENDS**  
**of LESBIANS *and* GAYS, Inc.**

**NEWSLETTER**

editor: joe bernstein

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JUNE/JULY '88, Issue 133

P.O. Box 24565 • Los Angeles, California 90024 • (213) 472-8952

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(6) A celebration at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel marked the culmination of the two year project of the Task Force on Family Diversity. In the extensive report, over 100 recommendations were made to the Mayor and the City Council, not only on gay/lesbian families, but on issues on child care and others that affect all families. Adele, who served on the Task Force was one of those who received a citation for her contribution to the project. Special thanks to attorney Tom Coleman who put the report together.

There are copies of (1) The Final Report and (2) The Public Hearing Transcript. These are available from the Family Diversity Project, P.O. Box 65756, L.A., CA 90065. Cost is ten dollars each. Make out checks to I.S.H.R. (Institute for Human Resources)

## Family Proposals Put Into Action

City officials and community organizations are starting to implement recommendations proposed last month by the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity. The Final Report of the Task Force contains more than 35 proposals involving gay and lesbian family issues.

Los Angeles City Councilman Michael Woo, who convened the panel two years ago, started the implementation process. A City Council committee chaired by Woo has recommended that the full Council grant sick leave and bereavement leave to city employees with domestic partners. The Council will vote on the measure this summer.

Thomas F. Coleman, author of the final report, and Christopher McCauley, co-chair of the panel, joined Woo at a Municipal Elections Committee of Los Angeles (MECLA) civic event to disclose implementation plans on other recommendations.

Woo told a gathering of gay and lesbian community leaders that he is asking City Attorney James Hahn to render two legal opinions. Is it illegal for businesses to give consumer discounts to married couples but deny them to unmarried couples? Can a landlord legally refuse to rent a one-bedroom apartment to an unmarried couple? Strategies to overcome these problems will depend on the response to these questions, Woo said.

McCauley, a member of the city's Human Relations Commission, told the MECLA gathering that Mayor Tom Bradley is asking the presidents of all city commissions and the managers of all city departments to give him feedback on the report and recommendations. Both the city and the county Human Relations Commissions are examining recommendations dealing with discrimination in housing, employment, and insurance, McCauley said.

Coleman, who teaches a class on domestic partners' rights at USC Law Center, urged activists to closely study those proposals dealing with non-discrimination by city contractors, flexibility in employee benefit programs, discrimination against tenants and consumers, political appointments to city boards and commissions, hate crimes, domestic violence, and school programs. A major section of the report deals with domestic partnership families, Coleman noted.

A copy of the final report can be obtained by sending a \$10 contribution to the Institute for the Study of Human Resources, Family Diversity Project, PO Box 65756, Los Angeles, CA 90065. You may call them at (213) 258-8955. Checks should be made payable to ISHR.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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# LA Task Force Report On Family Diversity

*Includes 110 Recommendations*

by Jim Whelan

The Bar Association of New York played host to a special discussion on a report entitled "Strengthening Families: A Model for Community Action." issued last spring by a Los Angeles Task Force on Family Diversity. The report recognizes the reality of family life in the City of Los Angeles and lists 110 recommendations to adjust laws and social concepts to accommodate the diversity of family configurations that exist.

Co-chairs of the Los Angeles Task Force Christopher McCauley and Nora Baladerian were on hand to discuss their report at the meeting. Other featured speakers included Paula Ettelbrick, Legal Director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and special consultant to the Task Force Thomas Coleman.

The forum was held on January 12 at the Bar Association of New York and was co-sponsored by Bar Association, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Bar Association for Human rights, the Breakfast Forum, and an ad hoc committee on family diversity, which is still in formation.

In her remarks to the audience, Ettelbrick stated that the issue of family diversity from the gay and lesbian perspective is an issue she has been working on for two years. Ettelbrick recited several examples of the types of alternative and non-traditional families that are commonplace in our city today.

For example, she said, a widow and widower who are not married to each other have lived together in the woman's rent stabilized apartment since losing their spouses. When the woman dies, the landlord evicts the man because legally he has no rights to stay in the apartment. Ettelbrick also noted cases of gay and lesbian lovers who are not protected from sickness by family health insurance or cannot even take advantage of family excursion fares on Amtrak.

Ettelbrick said the laws of our country give deference to a certain kind of family structure when less than 50 percent of American families are actually constructed as such. Therefore, those individuals who are part of non-traditional families face unfair circumstances every day because the employers, the landlords and the laws in our country are built on contracts of outmoded and unrealistic views of family in society.

The diversity of family life in the United States today is due to a number of factors: sexual orientation, poverty, unmarried adults, cultural beliefs and aging, said Ettelbrick.

The Lambda lawyer said the momentum for change in laws that govern American family life was initiated by the lesbian and gay community. Today the trends to change much of the laws and social concepts can be detected in the efforts of many activists in different cities across the US to get domestic partner legislation adopted, in employers beginning to work with employees sensitizing them to family diversity issues, and in the unions where more inclusive definitions of the family are being demanded by members.

Christopher McCauley, a co-chair of the Los Angeles study, took the podium next and stated that the importance of the Task Force was to examine one of the oldest and most enduring institutions in society. He reported the family is alive in every state on every level, but that it is a profoundly different configuration than it was a generation ago.

The perceived image of the modern American family is still very close to the Ozzie and Harriet model of the 1950s: married heterosexuals with 2.2 children, a dog, a cat, a housewife and a wage earner, said McCauley. However, this perception has very little to do with reality; rather it merely demonstrates power of the modern media as the creator of the images of how we perceive ourselves, he said.

Today we are moving from the age of the nuclear family to the post nuclear family which has yielded a variety of configurations of family life, McCauley said. The debate on the family in the United States is being engaged in in a number of ways, he continued. On the far right are the fundamental religious perspectives that regard any family that could be described as non-traditional as "anti-family." On the far left, the traditional family is regarded as an institution that is often oppressive to women and children. However, the vast majority of us are left to struggle with reality, he concluded.

McCauley noted the report indicates that in Los Angeles, in 50 percent of the families both the spouses work, 11 percent are single-parent homes and, 31 percent of the households in Los Angeles are a single person living alone.

The 110 recommendations of the task force included in its final report indicate that the family is something other than the structure laws say it is. McCauley defined the family by its function and not by its structure. He argued that family law should become more inclusive than exclusive and that legal and social barriers exist to hinder a more inclusive definition of family.

McCauley asserted the work of the Task Force was not to define what is right and what is wrong, but rather to focus on reality. McCauley, also president of the Los Angeles City Human Relations Commission and a senior consumer affairs representative of the Southern California Gas Company, said the LA Task Force has become a model for other efforts to study family law subject around the country. McCauley said the task force relied chiefly on funding from the private sector.

Nora Baladerian, the other co-chair of the Task Force, described the structure of the Task Force. The 40 members were split into 20 groups of two-member working teams. She further recommended this system because with more than two on a team there is always the option to pass the buck. Aided by student research volunteers these working teams thoroughly examined the issues assigned to them and the excellent reports that resulted translated into 110 recommendations.

The report has had some measurable public policy impact in Los Angeles, reported Baladerian. She said Mayor Tom Bradley has required all department heads in city government to read it and consider implementing its recommendations. Also a city commission on the status of women has used it as a tool to implement policy on providing elderly women affordable housing and to address the issues of intergenerational child care. The City of Los Angeles Commission on Education has used the report to establish curricula on dealing with homophobia among students, set guidelines on schoolyard bullying, and deal with ethnic slurs, she reported.

The last speaker was Thomas Coleman, an attorney and adjunct professor at the University of Southern California Law Center. Acting as a special consultant to the Task Force, Coleman ignited a lot of enthusiasm among the working groups. Family law has been a subject of study for Coleman for many years and he previously was a member of the California Joint Select Task force on the Changing Family. Coleman defined the family as how people function in a household sharing economic concerns and interdependencies. ■

Continued from Page 1

The policy change sparked a brief debate, with Bernardi calling it "a gay ordinance."

Other council members pointed out it would also apply to unmarried heterosexual couples.

Nonetheless, Bernardi said he was troubled by the values the policy would reflect. "This is a major change. . . . It's what the social cost is, that's my problem with this," he said. Councilwoman Jean Milke Flores also voiced reservations about the policy change, citing a staff report that estimated a potential loss of productivity of \$2.3 million a year. Flores also suggested that the personnel policy could lead to changes in insurance and retirement policies and might involve city records as a source of evidence for "palimony" cases.

### Generic Proposal

As an alternative, Flores proposed a "generic" personal leave for all employees as an alternative.

But Woo and Councilman Joel Wachs argued that Flores' proposal would be more costly to the city. Moreover, they questioned the \$2.3-million estimate. They noted, for example, that an employee who now takes a sick day to tend to an ailing relative loses that day from his sick leave allotment. Under present circumstances, Wachs said, an employee taking time off to care for a domestic partner can simply call in sick. The new policy, Wachs said, would mean the employee "wouldn't have to lie."

After Flores' proposal failed on a 5-7 vote, the council affirmed the new policy, 10 to 2.

In an interview, Woo said that gay employees in particular have often felt the "injustice" of existing policies because of sickness and death from AIDS.

Existing policies 'were out of step with reality.'

—Councilman Michael Woo, ordinance sponsor

# Council OKs Leave for Unwed Partners

By SCOTT HARRIS, Times Staff Writer

Unmarried Los Angeles city employees living with a "domestic partner" are entitled to the same sick leave and bereavement leave allowances as members of traditional families under an ordinance adopted Wednesday.

The ordinance, approved on a 10-2 vote and subject to approval of the mayor, applies to unmarried couples whether heterosexual or homosexual.

The measure reflects "the changing definition of the family," said Councilman Michael Woo, who sponsored the ordinance. Existing policies, he said, "were out of step with reality."

An opponent, Councilman Ernani Bernardi, meanwhile, portrayed the measure as a

troubling "gay ordinance" with hidden social costs.

The ordinance affords city employees not married to their mates the same personal leave considerations granted members of traditional families in the instance of sickness or death. The city provides three days of paid bereavement leave when a member of a city employee's immediate family dies, and paid sick leave may be taken for other family emergencies.

To qualify for such benefits, unmarried couples would have to file confidential affidavits with the city affirming they have lived together for the previous 12 months, have a "mutual obligation of support," "share the

common necessities of life," are each other's sole domestic partner, are not related by blood and that, neither partner is married. It was estimated that 5% to 8% of the city's 43,537 full-time employees may qualify.

With the council's vote, Los Angeles became the largest municipality to recognize non-traditional "domestic partners," Woo said. San Francisco, Berkeley, Santa Monica and West Hollywood have similar policies, he said.

The new policy, Woo told the council, would provide "a greater sense of equity for those who do not belong to traditional family units."

Please see PARTNERS, Page 4



# The Los Angeles Daily Journal

Thursday, October 6, 1988

## Spouse Benefits Extended to 'Domestic Partners'

By G.M. BUSH

Despite warnings of grave social costs, the Los Angeles City Council voted Wednesday to include "domestic partners" in the "immediate family" category under which city employees are granted bereavement and sick leave.

Under the plan, a domestic partner could be a close friend, a common-law spouse or a homosexual lover. To qualify, a confidential affidavit would be filed with the city declaring the person's identity.

Councilman Ernani Bernardi strongly objected to the measure, which he characterized as a "gay ordinance."

After a discussion of potential cost of the proposal, he said money is not the issue, but rather that "it goes beyond what is considered to be the normal relationship between a male and a female."

"This is a major change," he said. "It's the social costs; that's my problem."

The council, however, voted 11-2 in favor of the proposal. The concept will be presented to employee unions in contract talks.

The length of a potential leave would depend on the employee's particular job and Memorandum of Understanding contract. City law allows up to five days off for an illness of a family member and three days bereavement leave.

Last year, an Employee Benefits Survey conducted by the city found that approximately 4.2 percent, or 840, of the city's 20,000 civilian em-

ployees live with a domestic partner.

The proposal adopted by the council was supported by the two-person majority of the council's Governmental Operations Committee: Councilman Michael Woo, the committee chairman, and Councilwoman Gloria Molina.

Their majority report to the full council said current employee benefit plans were "designed in the 1960s for the typical family of a working husband, non-working wife, and two or more dependent children."

Now, however, fewer than 10 percent of the workforce fits this model. "The majority of workers today are single, two-income couples, singles with dependents, and older employees. 'One size fits all' when applied to benefit plans, no longer best fits the needs of today's employees," the report stated.

### Feasibility Study

The report was based in part on a feasibility study conducted by the Personnel Department that included a review of domestic partnership ordinances already adopted by the cities of Berkeley and West Hollywood and the Berkeley Unified School District. Proposals now under review in San Francisco and Madison, Wisc., also were studied.

The committee's third member, Councilwoman Joan Milke Flores, opposed the plan, noting that the city administrative officer had reported that the inclusion of domestic partners in employee benefits would be seen as a move toward incorporating them in health, dental, insurance and retirement benefits.

She also cited the high cost of the program, again relying on data from the CAO, which concluded that extending bereavement and sick leave benefits to domestic partners would cost about \$2.3 million annually.

Councilman Joel Wachs challenged this figure, saying employees would not receive any additional time off.

Granting health benefits to domestic partners would cost the city anywhere from \$3.9 million to \$5.2 million a year, Flores said.

When the matter came before the committee for consideration, those who testified said they planned to seek extension of other benefits to domestic partners in the future, she said.

Instead of expanding sick and bereavement leave, the council should consider a "generic time-off" plan "to be used by any employee for any purpose without justification," she said, calling this approach "less complicated and more equitable."

Woo called this proposal "potentially much more expensive to the city."

Flores strongly objected to the confidential affidavits that would be needed to validate domestic partner relationships. "Although the City Attorney has reported that the City will probably not incur any liability through this process, it is clearly not within the purview of local governments to validate personal relationships," she said in her minority report.

The proposal was one of 110 recommendations of the Task Force on Family Diversity in a report issued in May, "Strengthening Families: A Model for Community Action."

The 37-member blue-ribbon task force was convened by Woo and included representatives of Los Angeles' legal, religious, educational and business communities. Parents, students and governmental employees also were included.

The report was written by attorney Thomas F. Coleman, the panel's principal consultant.

LOS ANGELES

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## What makes a family?

It's a question the L.A. City Council is asking, and bungling, with its decision to grant leave to city employees who must deal with the illness or death of a "domestic partner." The city has an opportunity to produce a more humane definition of "family," but it won't do so with this poorly constructed piece of legislation. As it stands, it could be even more unfair than the traditional rules it would replace.

It's important to note that the council's vote Wednesday, which has to be ratified in a second vote, extended only leave benefits — and only affects city employees. But in other communities that have made similar moves, it's been a first step toward extending all benefits, especially health insurance, to persons sharing households who don't fit the traditional family mold. It's the thin end of a very effective wedge.

The new criteria for being a domestic partner include the requirement that the couple has lived together for 12 months. Why that period? There are married parents of shorter acquaintance.

The couple also has to have a "mutual obligation of support" and "share common necessities." Not only is that vague, but many married folks can't make those claims, while some friends and neighbors can. In addition, both halves must be each other's sole domestic partner and

neither can be married, nor can they be related by blood.

Once the health insurance benefits start creeping in, and they will, then left out under these rules will be domestic partners who happen to be the siblings or parents of the worker. A single mother whose own elderly mother runs the home and watches the kids wouldn't be able to get her parent covered, despite the valuable service provided. But meanwhile a man's live-in lover who doesn't contribute to the upkeep of the home would be included. Fair? No.

Many would argue that the one sure way to keep this situation from getting too confused and unfair is to limit benefits to married couples. But that restriction just doesn't allow for changes in the American family. For instance, no system is reasonable that would deny a single parent the ability to earn benefits for a family member helping out at home. The more logical way to determine who should be considered part of the family is whether or not the individuals actually form an economic unit that supports, and runs, a household. And do they take responsibility for each other?

That's not a perfect way to decide who gets to share an employee's benefits, but it's a much more equitable formula. The city should look again at the family.

# MECLA

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## MECLA Wins Major Victory! *City Council Passes 10-2 Domestic Partnership Law*



On Wednesday, October 5, 1988, Los Angeles became the first major metropolitan area to have a Domestic Partnership Policy. The Council's action to establish this policy was overwhelmingly adopted by a 10-2 vote. Yes votes were cast by Marvin Braude, Robert Farrell, John Ferraro, Ruth Galanter, Gil Lindsay, Gloria Molina, Joy Picus, Joel Wachs, Mike Woo, and Zev Yaroslavsky. No votes were cast by Ernani Bernardi and Joan Milke Flores. Richard Alatorre, Hal Bernson, and Nate Holden abstained.

Early in 1988 MECLA was approached by Mike Woo's office to spearhead the lobbying efforts for the Domestic Partnership Policy. This policy was part of 110 recommendations put forth by the Task Force on Family Diversity.

MECLA intends to keep up its lobbying efforts as regards the Task Force in both gay and non-gay related recommendations, i.e. childcare, senior citizen issues.

The establishment of domestic partnership affects only Los Angeles City employees (Berkeley and West Hollywood already have similar policies). The exact wording passed by

the City Council was written by MECLA Co-chair Diane Himes and MECLA Political/Advocacy Committee member David Link, who as part of the Family Diversity Task Force authored the research paper on gay and lesbian couples.

*The broadened definition of "immediate family" includes the term "domestic partner" relationships for which an employee is entitled to take family sick leave and bereavement leave. The following definition of "domestic partner" is adopted, and the city's Personnel Department is 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.*