

STRENGTHENING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
IN LONG BEACH:

An Assessment of
Family Diversity
In Community Life

Report of

THE LONG BEACH
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

1991

SUPPLEMENT

Commissioned By
LONG BEACH CITY COUNCIL

Principal Consultant
SPECTRUM INSTITUTE

LONG BEACH FAMILY DIVERSITY PROJECT

Sponsored by the
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LONG BEACH FAMILY DIVERSITY PROJECT
Supplement to Final Report
(Background papers and Source Materials)

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Public Hearing Testimony

June 8, 1990

I. Thomas F. Coleman

Member, California Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family; adjunct professor of law at USC.

While a stereotype of the "nuclear family" continues to exist, that stereotype is both inaccurate and misleading. Only about 11-15% of today's families consist of a working father, mother who stays home, and that couple's children, with both parents of the same race and religious belief. A more complete picture of families must include the realities of stepfamilies, families which include two working parents, families of more than one race or religious belief, single parent families, domestic partnerships, foster families, and extended families.

The definition of the word "family" has historically been more diverse than the narrow stereotype often referred to today. Sociologist Stephanie Coontz has found that diverse family forms have been common throughout history. Theologians such as Father Robert Brown argue that the often-appealed-to Judeo-Christian tradition relies heavily on defining "family" in terms of those living within a single household. For the purpose of providing social services, many are now choosing to define the word with primary emphasis on family functions, rather than narrowly-prescribed legal or blood relationships between parties. Recent public-opinion surveys have found that as many as 74% of Americans would broadly define "family" as a group who love and care for each

other, while only 20% would use the narrowest definition, people who are related to one another by blood, marriage or adoption.

Government has also used broad definitions of "family," both in judicial decisions dating back to 1921, and up to the 1989 landmark decision by the highest court in the state of New York, Braschi v. Stahl Assoc., which defined "family" by looking to factors such as the exclusivity of the relationship among the parties, the emotional and financial commitments involved, the parties' reliance on one another, and their dedication to one another. Public policy studies, such as the California Commission on Personal Privacy, the Los Angeles City Task Force on Family Diversity, and the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, have also recommended looking to similar factors.

How the word is defined is relevant in a number of contexts: employee benefits such as health care, survivor benefits, and family sick leave or counseling policies, eligibility for housing, and consumer discounts. The recent Consumer Task Force on Marital Status conducted for the Los Angeles City Attorney concluded, for example, that unmarried people are regularly discriminated against in a wide variety of ways solely because they are not married, despite laws which prohibit marital status discrimination.

The witness made six major recommendations:

- 1) that a broad policy statement be formulated to urge the use of inclusive definitions of "family;"
- 2) that the City examine its employment policies to see if there is discrimination based on the marital or family status of employees;
- 3) that the City determine whether city contractors have policies of marital or family discrimination;
- 4) that the City Attorney adopt a routine policy of considering all definitions of "family" when that term is used in city legislation or policies;

- 5) that if the City lobbies in Sacramento or Washington, it should have a consistent policy on families;
- 6) that the City determine if the definition of "family" used by city departments and agencies is inclusive or restrictive.

Responding to a question by David Newell, the witness testified that the Braschi decision has been influential across the nation as a precedent. Alan Lowenthal asked for an update of the recommendations made by the Los Angeles Family Diversity Task Force. The witness testified that many of the Task Force recommendations, such as extending family sick and bereavement leave benefits to the domestic partners of city employees, have been implemented. The City Attorney's Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination was formed as a result of a Family Diversity Task Force recommendation. Recommendations about elderly respite care, and various child care programs are also being pursued.

II. Dianne Piastro

Nationally syndicated columnist on issues related to disability

The witness testified that she only became disabled at age 34, emphasizing that issues raised by the disabled community may potentially affect virtually everyone. This is true in two respects: the devaluation and exclusion of the disabled from the community at large, and the physical barriers faced by the disabled, including such routine matters as curb cuts in order to cross a street, stores and buses which are inaccessible to those with particular disabilities, or public telephones. The witness testified that she has received over 500 letters from Long Beach readers about such experiences.

The witness provided a definition of "a person with a disability:" An individual with a physical or mental impairment

that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as walking, talking, seeing, hearing, reading, writing, climbing stairs, or driving), or a person who is regarded by others as having such an impairment because of appearance or mannerisms. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are about 4.7 million disabled children; a Census Bureau study reports that 37.3 million adults over age 15 have some sort of activity limitation, approximately one in five Americans, making the disabled community one of the largest minorities in the country. The witness reemphasized that anyone can, at any time, become a member of the disabled community.

The witness made four major recommendation:

- 1) that the City create a Disability Services Department in order to centralize compliance with access and affirmative action laws. The DSD should have a director who is a disabled person, as well as adequate support staff;
- 2) that the City create a Commission on Disability to replace the current Citizens Advisory Committee for the Handicapped. The new commission should be comprised of disabled members, and should identify policies and services which require attention, such as housing, the impact of Handicapped Appeals Board rulings, issues of access, disaster preparedness plans day care programs for children with disabilities, and particular problems affecting families with disabled members;
- 3) that the City establish the position of Access Officer within the Building and Safety Department as a liaison with the Handicapped Appeals Board and the Department of Public Works;
- 4) that the school district provide education about disability in the schools.

The witness testified that private and public grants are available to fund such programs, and that hiring a grant writer would be a cost-effective way of obtaining such grants. Moreover, the cost of noncompliance with the laws may be higher than the cost of compliance, both in economic and in human terms.

In response to a question from Dave Newell, the witness testified that conditions such as those at the public library, where there are inaccessible bathrooms, are easy to remedy, but that there is no current, effective watchdog commission to assure that the laws regarding access are complied with. Alan Lowenthal asked about CACH recommendations to the City Council, and the witness answered that nothing has come of the recommendations. Stan Nathanson inquired whether the witness had contacted the City Council with her proposal for a new commission, and she replied that she had had brief discussions about it, but had not successfully been able to make a formal proposal, but felt that if the City were to establish such a commission, it could provide a model for other cities. Don Fancher asked whether the school district had done anything about incorporating disability issues into the curriculum, and the witness answered that nothing had been done yet, to her knowledge. Finally, Chris McCauley noted the witness's assistance to the Human Relations Commission, and her useful article on how stereotypes about the disabled are often embedded in the language we use.

III. Joan Filbey

Parent and member of the board of the Long Beach Disabled Resource Center

The witness has been a longtime resident of Long Beach, and in addition to being disabled herself, has several family members who are disabled. She has a personal history of work with the disabled community.

A major focus of her testimony was the problems associated with mainstreaming disabled children into regular school programs. Problems include untrained aides and substitute teachers, and socialization problems for the disabled children which arise from such things as their need for special clothing, or inability to get

to social events that may take place great distances from where they live. Mainstreaming may also present problems if there are inadequate introductions to the program for the school's non-disabled students. Such introductory programs for teachers, staff and students are critical if mainstreaming is to succeed at all.

Recreation is also a problem for people with disabilities. While some adaptive recreation programs exist, they may not be adequate. And since a large number of disabled people are on various kinds of assistance programs, such as SSI, Medicare or Medi-Cal, they often cannot afford to participate in many recreation programs. The witness recommended waiving or reducing fees as a potential solution to this problem.

Shirley Guy pointed out that the school district is trying to address some of the problems, and asked how to bridge the gap between specialized schools and schools which are involved in mainstreaming. The witness emphasized that introductory programs for staff, students and teachers are very important. She pointed out that a problem with the specialized schools is that they are often located on the far edges of the school district, rather than in more centralized locations, which would make them more convenient for a larger number of disabled people. Tom Housel asked if the witness was aware of any recreational programs which waived or reduced fees for the disabled, and the witness answered that she was unaware of any. Mr. Housel then asked if the witness knew who, within the City, to approach with such a proposal, and she answered that, since there is no centralized authority for disabled issues within the city, it is difficult to ascertain who to approach.

IV. Peggy Oliveri

Advocate for housing for the disabled

The witness testified that there is a lack of housing that is accessible to the disabled. Even when housing is listed as accessible, this is sometimes not true. She related her own experience of moving into a supposedly accessible apartment. While looking at the apartment she noticed that the mailbox could not be reached without going up a six inch high step, thus preventing wheelchair access. She discussed this with the apartment manager, who assured her this "oversight" would be remedied by the time she moved in. She moved into the apartment, and at present the mailbox is still inaccessible to her. After many negotiations, and assistance from the Western Law Center for the Handicapped, a second mailbox was placed which was accessible to her.

The City did not take part in correcting the problem. This demonstrates a lack of commitment to the laws requiring access. Apartments, stores and restaurants are all apt to present problems of noncompliance with current access laws. If the City does not enforce the laws, they are effectively useless.

The witness recommended that the City hire an access officer in the Building and Safety Department as a means of demonstrating that it does believe access laws should be enforced. The access officer could also serve as a liaison with the Handicapped Appeals Board and the Department of Public Works, to ensure the laws are complied with.

Dave Newell asked whether there are requirements that anyone displaying an access sign be making a truthful representation about the establishment's accessibility. The witness noted that she is not an expert on the law, but suggested that the state building code may contain such requirements, and recommended that the

Commission follow up on this subject. Stan Nathanson inquired about who has the authority to disseminate and put up access signs, and the witness answered that they are apparently available everywhere, so that anyone could purchase and display such a sign. Alan Lowenthal asked how disabled people find accessible living accommodations, and the witness answered that there is no centralized information clearing house--the disabled must rely on word of mouth, and access signs. Chris McCauley emphasized how important the issue of misrepresentation is, given this reliance on the signs.

V. Mark Malone

Manager of Long Range Planning for Long Beach Transit

The witness gave a brief history of Long Beach Transit, which is a public, non-profit corporation wholly owned by the City. He then outlined the five basic types of services: regular fixed routes; Dial-a-Lift, for those unable to use the fixed routes; the SCAN program for the frail and elderly; the Handivan program for developmentally disabled children; and the Promenade Tram Service downtown. LBT serves over 21 million passengers a year on the fixed route, and over 100,000 on the Dial-a-Lift.

One of the goals of LBT is to make all fixed routes accessible by 1991. Nearly 100% of the current fleet are fully equipped with lifts. It is estimated that this year about 20,000 wheelchair passengers will ride the fixed routes. The current focus is on making the stops accessible. LBT has fare discounts for disabled passengers, and negotiations are under way with The Southern California Rapid Transit District and the Los Angeles County Transportation Department to institute unlimited monthly use passes on the light rail, LBT and RTD systems.

The Dial-a-Lift service has been in existence since 1976, and

provides curb-to-curb transportation for people with any disability that would make use of the regular fixed routes difficult. Individuals must first register with the service. Once registered, clients schedule trips with dispatchers who are trained in the needs of disabled passengers. There are continuing attempts to improve this service, including a major fleet replacement project now underway.

Joel Utu and Shirley Guy inquired into the problems raised in earlier testimony about inaccessible recreation buses. The witness clarified that recreation buses are provided by the school district, not LBT. Ms. Guy then asked what problems were involved in making bus stops accessible, and the witness testified that a central criterion is safety. There are apparently times when it is especially difficult to make a stop both accessible and safe. Stan Nathanson inquired whether the disabled community had been consulted by the LBT. The witness noted that CACH had been contacted. Mr. Nathanson then asked whether LBT had disabled employees, and the witness answered that while he was personally unaware of the workforce make-up, LBT is subject to EEO requirements. Chris McCauley asked whether wheelchair lifts on the buses were regularly checked, and the witness answered that was part of each vehicle's daily safety check. Mr. McCauley then asked whether there are problems with the lifts not operating, and the witness replied that this was an occasional problem. In answer to a follow-up question from Mr. McCauley, the witness said that when customers have complaints about lifts that do not work, they can call LBT's regular customer service number. LBT does not have a special 24-hour complaint line.

VI. Lupe Macker

Regional Director of Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles is a member agency of Catholic Charities USA, and operates 30 programs on 50 sites in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Its purpose is to meet the needs of families, to coordinate existing welfare and health facilities, and initiate new service programs that seem to be needed. The organization operates a shelter for homeless families in Long Beach.

According to a recent report, there were between 43-50,000 homeless people in Los Angeles County during the year ending in June 1989, which includes 28-32,000 children. In 1989, the Long Beach family shelter served 794 people, including 187 families and 311 children. Of the families served, 36% had a female as head of the household.

The shelter's policy is that families should remain together. This distinguishes it from some programs which keep men together, and women and children in separate areas. The shelter allows people to stay there for up to 30 days, and provides meals, laundry facilities, clothing, child care, and classes in nutrition, budgeting, job search skills, and follow-up services. A central goal of the shelter is to provide a transition between homelessness and a return to the community. The shelter is presently housed in an aging building, and is in the process of finding a newer facility. The shelter's budget is currently \$113,762; funds from both the City and the County have recently been cut back.

The witness had four major recommendations:

- 1) that the City allocate more money for agencies assisting the homeless;

- 2) that the City coordinate its health services with those provided by the County;
- 3) that the city demonstrate support for low-income housing;
- 4) that the City help to improve the educational opportunities for minorities, including head-start programs, programs dealing with high drop-out rates, and school lunch programs.

Shirley Guy asked about the shelter's current capacity and time limits, and the witness answered that the shelter can now house 63 people at a time, but would like its new facility to accommodate 100. After the 30 day limit, the shelter refers its clients to other shelters, if necessary. Stan Nathanson then asked if the witness was aware of any estimates of the number of homeless in Long Beach; the witness referred to a 1987 study that indicated 3-5,000 homeless in the city, which she suggested was probably higher now. Alan Lowenthal asked whether there had been any neighborhood resistance to low-cost housing or shelters. The witness suggested some resistance, but focused on the city's ability to absorb low-cost housing. A central problem is the policy to tear down old housing without making provisions for new affordable housing, a policy which should be examined.

Dave Newell asked what the City could do to assist the witness in finding a new facility. The witness suggested that a program for earmarking certain property for social services use would be very helpful, although no such program exists at present. When asked in a follow-up whether the city's Homeless Coordinator had been helpful, the witness replied affirmatively, but noted that the job of Homeless Coordinator would have to evolve in the future to meet changing needs. Don Fancher noted that it would ultimately be useful to define the term "low-cost housing." Tom Housel asked what changes to the city's housing code would be useful, and the witness answered that policies regarding single room occupancy and 1:1 replacement should be examined. Chris McCauley inquired about

statistics regarding people of color at the shelter. A high percentage are black and hispanic, with few Asians. The present facility is somewhat accessible to the disabled, and fuller access is a goal at the new facility.

VII. Ingrid Bullock

Acting Director of the Long Beach Fair Housing Foundation

The Foundation is a private, non-profit organization, designed to provide equal access to housing. The witness noted that after 25 years of fair housing laws, the same fair housing issues of a quarter century ago still exist. A principal problem is the lack of enforcement of existing laws.

The witness defined "discrimination" as denying access to protected classes, such as members of identified races, creeds, colors, the handicapped, and discrimination based on family status. A common form of family discrimination is a disinclination to rent to families with children; some landlords will, for example, refuse to rent to such families, or, if a family has several children, recite a policy of accepting only up to two children. On occasion, landlords or rental agents will steer families away from particular housing or neighborhoods. This is similar to a policy, which sometimes still exists, of steering members of various racial or ethnic minorities away from certain areas.

The FHF receives 4-7 inquiries about potential discrimination daily. The rate is often higher during the summer, which has a higher rate of relocations. In Long Beach during the year July 1989-June 1990, the Foundation received about 300 complaints. Of these, 142 dealt with race, primarily from blacks and hispanics; 63 complaints involved children; and 25 calls were about discrimination based on handicap. Single minority female heads of households are the most likely to experience housing

discrimination. The Foundation anticipates an increase in complaints based on handicap due to the recent passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The witness had two major recommendations for the City. First, she suggested that outreach into the Asian community should be a priority. Asians may not be aware of the policy against discrimination in housing, or their rights in that area. Second, she recommended that the City take a pro-active role in eliminating discrimination: announcing a firm policy of anti-discrimination, education programs designed to demonstrate that commitment, etc. She finally suggested that there may be a connection between housing discrimination and homelessness: that those who have been discriminated against may ultimately lose hope, and thus become homeless.

Gladys Gutierrez asked why cases of discrimination were sometimes dropped. The witness answered that the Foundation is often unable to find evidentiary support for the charges. In addition, clients sometimes do not wish to pursue the charges once they have found other housing. In answer to a follow-up, the witness answered that discrimination had become more subtle over the years, thus making it harder to eradicate. Stan Nathanson asked how the City could assist the Foundation in outreaching to the Asian community. The witness answered that an Asian staff person would be useful. There was a brief discussion of the problem of Asians, themselves, discriminating against non-Asians, which appears to be an emerging problem that outreach programs could address.

Shirley Guy asked whether the Foundation had any disabled staff members. The witness replied that it did not have any regular disabled staff, although some volunteers are disabled. Tom Housel inquired if the Foundation kept statistics on prosecutions of persistent violators. The witness replied that many cases

settle, meaning there are not many actual convictions to keep track of. The Foundation keeps some records, but the witness noted that the Foundation refers its litigation to outside agencies and firms. Finally, Chris McCauley asked whether there had been any cases of discrimination based on AIDS, sexual orientation or unmarried partners. The witness answered that there had not yet been any complaints based on AIDS or sexual orientation, but that there had been recent complaints about unmarried partner status.

VIII. Jack Newby

**President of Southland Political Action Committee (SOLPAC),
Attorney and former board president of the Long Beach Gay and
Lesbian Center**

The witness began his presentation by noting that the lesbian and gay community is highly diverse. Health Department estimates indicate there are approximately 50,000 lesbian and gay citizens in the city of Long Beach. Since there are no outward indications of being homosexual, lesbian and gay citizens are an invisible minority whose members cross all socio-economic, racial, religious and occupational lines.

To the gay community, family issues are currently central. A heterosexual couple married for less than one day automatically receive rights and privileges which a same-sex couple who have been together for 25 years cannot achieve (this is because in California, the state restricts a person's choice of marriage partners to those of the opposite sex). Because same-sex couples form permanent partnerships identical to marriages, they have formed a nationwide network of organizations to provide same-sex couples with support.

Same-sex couples face an array of barriers. These include issues surrounding the purchase of a home, where real estate agents

may refuse to sell a home to an adult couple who are not of opposite sexes. Gay male couples experience discrimination when purchasing health insurance, if the insurer makes the stereotypical assumption that all gay men have AIDS. Same-sex couples who have custody of children face discrimination in some instances. An especially critical issue is inter-family relationships; because of still prevalent homophobia, lesbians and gay men are often ostracized by their own blood relatives, including their parents.

There are also highly emotional issues surrounding death and dying. A same-sex life partner may be excluded from seeing his or her lover in the hospital if the hospital restricts visits to those related by blood, marriage or adoption, and blood relatives may use such a hospital policy to punish the lover. Additional problems surround the writing of a will. Lesbians and gay men must be exceedingly specific when drafting wills, and their wishes may still be overridden by vindictive blood relatives, who may use unclear laws to deny any bequests to the decedent's same-sex partner because that partner is not deemed to be a member of the decedent's "family," since the partners were not married.

Separate issues arise with regard to the media, which may perpetuate stereotypes, or fail entirely to address the problems faced by members of the gay community. While relations between the gay community and the Press-Telegram have improved over the years, members of the gay community must still rely heavily on papers and newsletters published by the gay community, itself. This, of course, informs the gay community, but fails to inform heterosexuals, who may persist in believing that gay people are not members of the community in which all are living. The witness noted that, despite stereotypes, the gay community is not limited to certain geographic regions of the city; lesbians and gay men live in virtually all zip codes in Long Beach.

Finally, the witness testified that AIDS has had a tremendous

effect on the gay community. The Center provides many service and education programs to deal, not only with AIDS issues, but the broader questions facing the gay community in Long Beach.

The witness's primary recommendation was that the city's anti-discrimination law needs to be clarified and enforced. Particular problems have arisen regarding the ordinance's language permitting exceptions, thus creating a city policy in favor of discrimination in certain instances.

Dave Newell asked the witness what the City could do about the issue of same-sex relationships. The witness pointed to the city's role as an employer as an example of how the city, itself, while announcing a policy of non-discrimination, engages in discrimination against the committed lifetime partners of homosexual employees by excluding them from benefits afforded to the lifetime partners of heterosexual employees. In addition, there is continuing evidence of discrimination against homosexual people by the Police Department which must be addressed. Tom Housel asked if there had been an increase in discrimination based on sexual orientation. The witness answered that there had been, some of it quite blatant. For example, there are service organizations in the city which specifically refuse to provide services to lesbians or gay men, yet fail to see this as discrimination. Similarly, some city agencies will not pursue claims of discrimination by lesbian or gay citizens.

Alan Lowenthal expressed concern about lesbian and gay youth. The witness pointed out that it is often difficult for the organizations serving homosexual adults to provide counseling services for teens because of the highly-charged prejudicial notion that homosexuals "recruit" young people. Mr. Lowenthal emphasized the gravity of this problem due to the consistently high rates of suicides and drop-outs among homosexual young people. The only program designed to address this, Project 10, developed in the Los

Angeles Unified School District, is under consideration in the Long Beach schools.

IX. Sue Caves

Assistant Director, Long Beach AIDS Network, co-founder of Families Who Care

The witness began by stating that while it is estimated that 4,000 Long Beach residents are currently infected with HIV (which is the virus that causes AIDS), it is nearly certain that the number is much higher. Already, there have been 400 deaths from AIDS in the city.

Many people focus on how AIDS affects the patient, but the witness testified that for every person who is infected with the virus, approximately 25 other people become involved, in some degree with that person. These are primarily family members, whether under the "traditional" definition of family, or under the broader definitions under review by the Commission.

The witness testified that her own son had died of AIDS, and related her story. She was her son's primary caregiver. Her situation was fortunate in that her son had health insurance, helping assist with the costs of the disease, such as a day nurse; this is not always the case. Many family members must quit their jobs to care for their loved one. The witness pointed out that care includes support, transportation and constant attention. She noted that she and her son had a full network of supportive family members, including brothers and sisters, who supported not only the son with AIDS, but one another. Again, she stressed that such love and support from blood relatives is usually not present; family members, due to homophobia and fear of AIDS, may abandon the person with AIDS.

She helped to found Families Who Care in order to provide both a support group for family members who might be afraid to even talk about AIDS (even to counselors, clergy members, etc.), and to provide a kind of surrogate extended family to those in need. The group also has a Family Support Fund to help bring distant families to the patient, if the family cannot otherwise afford to come.

Many family members are elderly, and may be unable to perform the tasks associated with primary caregiver. This is especially true when the caregiver is the sole means of support for both parties. There is little respite from the constant care required by those with AIDS. She noted that caregivers and AIDS activists suffer the same discrimination that persons with AIDS do.

The witness recommended that the city form an AIDS Commission. Such a commission could better address issues such as the cost-efficiency of at home care for those with AIDS. While residential care facilities are valuable, they should be reserved for those with no families. In addition, the city needs a strong policy of anti-discrimination. While the city's current ordinance is in place, strong leadership is necessary to carry out a policy of compassion, and to educate those who still have irrational fears about the disease.

Dave Newell inquired about attendant care at home. The witness explained that such care relieves the load on residential care facilities and hospitals. Chris McCauley asked if there is anything besides an AIDS Commission that could address the problems she had discussed. She stated the importance of all members of the community having personal contact either with a person with AIDS, or with a caregiver, in order to ease irrational fears. She said that it is important for those who are infected with the virus, or are caring for someone who is, to become public, if at all possible. Finally, Dave Newell asked if the city had been helpful. The witness answered that some council members had been helpful,

but that there were some who were less so.

X. Marilyn Grupp

Resident of a senior and disabled housing facility

The witness is 61 years old, and is in a wheelchair due to spina bifida. When she arrived in Long Beach, she had a housing voucher from San Francisco, and intended to secure housing with it. She found it difficult to obtain either affordable or accessible housing. She went to the Long Beach Disabled Resource Center for assistance, and was put on a two-year waiting list for Long Beach housing assistance.

She spent four months sleeping in her car, and eventually received a housing voucher from the DRC for single nights at a time in a motel. At the time she was doing volunteer work for the DRC. One day a problem developed at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and she called to say she would be in to work late. An assistant director of the DRC told her that if she was not at work immediately, the witness would lose her vouchers. It was impossible for her to get to work in time, and the assistant director did cancel the vouchers, causing the witness once again to sleep in her car.

She then went to the Catholic Charities shelter, which was only able to house her for a limited time. The DRC made an attempt to find emergency housing, but was unsuccessful.

The witness then moved into a building she had been waiting to be completed, but was assigned an apartment on the second floor. Nevertheless, the witness accepted the apartment, despite its difficulties for any disabled tenant, including, significantly, the lack of any accessible emergency exit.

The Housing Authority contacted her, and told her she would be eligible for a voucher, but would have to move into expensive quarters to get preferential treatment on their list.

The witness's chief complaint was what she felt were inadequate services provided by the Disabled Resource Center. She also emphasized that truly accessible housing must include accessible emergency exits.

Dave Newell pointed out that the disabled need a true advocate to guide them through the maze of city bureaucracy. The witness noted that the DRC was supposed to be such an advocate, and should be subject to oversight. Gladys Gutierrez noted that it is important that public officials, and particularly the mayor, should be accessible to the public on matters like this.

Nettie Coleman then responded briefly to the witness's complaints on behalf of the DRC. She noted that the agency is in its fifteenth year of operation, and had over 600 new clients last year. She pointed out that the DRC was founded by and for the disabled, in order to help them live more independently. She admitted that some problems cannot be solved because of circumstances, and suggested the witness's case may be an example of such difficulties.

XI. Diana Bonta

Director, Health and Human Services Department for the City of Long Beach

The witness began by noting that health and human services is normally a county responsibility, and that the city is unusual in making this a city responsibility. The department includes divisions dealing with Public Health, Animal Control, Human and Social Services, etc.

The Bureau of Public Health has primary responsibility for children's services, and deals with prenatal health, food coupons for children under five years old (which has had funds cut--the state only wants to provide services to children up to six months), child health screenings, pediatric care (in coordination with the schools), and communicable diseases.

The Bureau also provides refugee services, a broad range of AIDS programs, and has been involved with the California Healthy Cities Project. The Bureau has a public health lab, does water and milk testing, provides health services for the elderly, and provides the Matrix Cocaine program, targeting pregnant women.

The Bureau of Animal Control provides a program that brings pets into convalescent homes, and educates young people about responsible pet ownership.

The Bureau of Human and Social Services has responsibility for a child care program, a social services program, and a program for the homeless.

As time was extremely short, the witness was invited to reschedule an appearance to complete her presentation.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

1. **Milree Mellie**--Testified that the disabled community has made many accomplishments, including curb cuts.

2. **John Cote**--Is a resident of Signal Hill. He has been in a same-sex relationship for fourteen years, and expressed concern that the city has failed to support same-sex relationships in the way it supports opposite sex relationships. He emphasized that same-sex couples are families in the same way opposite sex couples are.

His primary concern was with health care. He testified that he is self-employed, while his partner works for the federal government. While the government has expressed interest in providing health care benefits for the partners of homosexual employees, health care providers have refused to provide benefits to anyone who is not formally married to their partner, the narrowest possible definition of family. This is clear and blatant discrimination.

The witness noted that young lesbians and gays need responsible role models to ease the pressures they often feel which lead to suicide and alcohol abuse. Seeing the successful long-term same-sex relationships which society tries to hide would reassure them that society has abandoned stereotypes about gay people, and will no longer tolerate discrimination in the law.

3. **Bernie Sanchez**--Testified that he has been involved with gangs and drugs, two pervasive and interrelated problems. He noted that gang members do not come to community services provided for them, that such services must do extensive outreach programs to be successful.

Public Hearing Testimony

June 21, 1990

I. Marilyn Wyman

Past President, Stepfamily Association of America, Family Counselor, Supervisor of Project Touch

The witness began her testimony by providing a definition: "A stepfamily is a family in which there is an adult couple in the household with at least one of the adults having a child by a previous relationship." She noted that the adult couple do not need to be married to fit into this definition.

The witness, herself, is a member of a stepfamily; she remarried after the death of her former spouse. Her current household includes nine children.

The Stepfamily Association of America (SAA) estimates that there are 1300 new stepfamilies forming each day in America. American children born in the 1980's have a one in three chance of living with a stepparent before they turn 18. The figures in California may be even higher.

The witness pointed out some of the many myths about stepfamilies: that they are the same as nuclear families; that members of the stepfamily will instantly love one another; that stepchildren are easier to manage when they are not living in the same house as the stepparent; that the death of a spouse makes stepparenting easier; the pervasive myth most children hold that their natural mother and father will get remarried; and the myth found so often in fairy tales that stepmothers are wicked. She

then contrasted the realities: that stepfamilies, because of their larger numbers, tend to be more complex; that stepfamilies are generally born out of loss; that there are legal restraints on the relationship between stepparent and stepchild; that stepfamilies tend to have looser boundaries than birth families; the problems surrounding the fact that the parent-child bond pre-dates the couple bond, sometimes making children feel more insecure; and the fact that the adult couple's sexuality is often more evident to children.

She then pointed out, using charts, the dramatic increase in the number of relationships between family members as more people become involved in the stepfamily relationship: additional grandparents, aunts and uncles, grandchildren, etc. In a stepfamily involving 17 people, for example, there are 131,071 possible relationships between the members.

There are a wide variety of emotions difficulties involved in stepfamily relationships, including the fact that parents must deal with their own emotions in coping with the ending of a prior marriage, and may be less attentive to their children's feelings over the loss of an absent parent. She emphasized that it is important that stepfamilies let go of unrealistic myths and expectations that might be contrary to their own reality. They should allow time for bonding, which usually takes a long while. Parents should give their children permission to develop a good relationship with both the new stepparent and with the absent parent. And the stepparents should spend time and energy on their own relationship.

The witness made the following recommendations to the Commission:

- 1) That they assist with Stepfamilies Day, the first Sunday in October;

- 2) That they recognize the many problems in schools, which often do not demonstrate an awareness of varied family forms;
- 3) That they assist in encouraging PTA's and PTSA's to form support groups for stepfamilies.

Ralph Mays questioned the witness on any current programs in the schools to address the problems she had mentioned. The witness noted the School Attendance Review Board in the south bay, which she works with, and which occasionally addresses such problems. She was aware of no organized program, but noted that she speaks to PTA's. Dave Newell asked whether SAA has dealt with the problems of stepfamilies in which the adult couple is lesbian or gay. The witness noted that many of the problems were the same as those faced by heterosexual-headed stepfamilies, including legal restraints. She also pointed out that, as with their heterosexual counterparts, the private sexual relationship between lesbian or gay stepparents is given more prominence than the sexuality of the original parents.

The witness provided the address from which literature is available: the national office of SAA, 212 Lincoln Center, 215 S. Centennial Mall, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68508. Tom Housel asked about potential Commission action, and the witness suggested that education and legal issues are primary concerns over which the city might have jurisdiction. Finally, Chris McCauley noted that SAA is a 10 year old voluntary association. He had attended their recent national conference, where it was noted that stepfamilies face many of the same legal problems faced by domestic partners.

II. Tonia Uranga

Regional Director, League of United Latin American Citizens

The witness is a long-time resident of Long Beach. She began her testimony with a profile of Latino families: 25-30% of the population of Long Beach is of Latino origin; there are many countries represented within this population. The community ranges from some of the founding families of the city to very recent arrivals from Mexico and Central America. Because a large number of the newer arrivals are not naturalized citizens, the political power of the community does not reflect its size.

Latinos have been a major factor in California's economic strength. Yet those who come here to find work often are unable to find adequate housing, causing extremely high density family living conditions. Parents may become frustrated because they are not able to spend the time they wish to with each child, assisting them with homework, etc. In addition, non-english speaking parents may be forced to take their children out of school in order to have the children translate for the parents when dealing with social services agencies, affecting both the child's education, and the school's ADA.

Child care is a priority concern to this community, as are the problems arising from the language barrier, and residency status.

The witness made a number of recommendations:

- 1) LULAC has recommended Family Learning Centers throughout the city to assist children with homework and basic skills;
- 2) Education of city employers about the recent immigration laws;
- 3) Expansion of child care to include infants and bilingual services;

- 4) Transitional housing for workers;
- 5) Implementation of the Limited English Proficient master plan, addressing the needs of those who are not proficient in English;
- 6) Adoption of the recommendations made by the Hispanic Advisory Committee;
- 7) Development and support of Vocational English as a Second Language classes;
- 8) Assistance to Spanish speaking small business owners
- 9) Materials in Spanish dealing with health maintenance programs;
- 10) Meeting affirmative action goals in the city;
- 11) Support of the Latino Historical Society;
- 12) Citizenship classes for all eligible residents;
- 13) A family-centered approach to social services, such as that by the Hispanic Apartment Managers Association.

Shirley Guy inquired about the funding for the family learning centers. After noting that there is no Long Beach facility, the witness the program is funded nationally, including funds through Jobs for Progress. Gladys Gutierrez asked about programs to instill confidence in Latino citizens about dealing with civil servants, who Latinos often lack trust in. The witness was aware of the problem, and suggested two ways to help solve it: by socializing the Latino population, and educating them about the bureaucracy; and by having the city hire more bilingual civil servants. In answer to a follow-up question, the witness noted that the school system does not provide translators, and parents must provide their own. She pointed out, though, that some schools have a separate Spanish-speaking PTA in addition to the English-speaking PTA, which can deal with many of the school problems. Among these are the fact that many Hispanic children are assessed as deficient, when they are only experiencing a language difficulty. Those who are truly deficient usually have difficulty

getting bilingual services.

Alan Lowenthal pointed out that education is a problem that affects the whole city. Dave Newell asked whether the local press has done anything to highlight the history of Latinos in the city. The witness noted that the Latino Historical Society, which was formed last year, had not discovered anything in the archives of the Press-Telegram in this area. Chris McCauley asked about the relations between the Latino community and the police. The witness noted that an advisory committee to the police department is virtually non-existent, though there is an Hispanic liaison officer. She pointed out that gangs are a real problem in the community, and that there are people in the Latino community working with some in the Cambodian community to address common gang problems. Ralph Mays asked about problems with the city's affirmative action programs. The witness replied that the goals are too conservative, they are not pro-active, and that the programs should be more targeted to department which interface directly with the community, such as the police, the library, etc.

III. Anita Loos-Hannifan

Employee of St. Mary Medical Center Department of Older Adult Services; faculty member CSULB graduate nursing program.

The witness made three recommendations. First, she suggested it is important to establish a program to provide medication counseling to older adults; a grant which had funded such a program has recently been cut off. Because older adults are often prescribed a variety of medications from various physicians, and due to the wide availability of over-the-counter medicines, there is seldom anyone to warn older adults about potentially adverse interactions between the medications.

Second, she recommended a Mental Health Services program

targeting older adults. The biggest problem facing older adults is untreated depression. The program could serve the short-term needs of those who are newly bereaved. It could also provide in-home counseling for those older adults who have become isolated. The witness has observed that older adults do not often attend groups which would provide such services.

Finally, she suggested that groups could be formed to provide help for those family members who are providing care for aging parents. Such groups could be modeled on an existing program at St. Mary's.

Shirley Guy asked for an estimate of the cost of such programs. The witness noted that the principal costs would include professional personnel, and, perhaps, facilities, though facilities could be provided. The medication counseling program would need a computer, and a trained pharmacist. Tom Housel asked about coordination of the programs with any existing church programs that might address these needs. The witness said that some coordination exists, but not much.

Gladys Gutierrez asked about the self-help group at Eldorado park. The witness noted that that program was started at St. Mary's campus, and moved to the park, but is not sponsored by the city at all. Dave Newell then asked about the problem of short-term counseling for the recently bereaved. The witness answered that there is a lack of referral services. She emphasized the point that seniors don't like to come to groups, and require one-to-one counseling. She noted that untreated depression can lead to alcoholism, suicide, etc. Some seniors are in their 80's, and have used up their Medicare benefits.

Don Fancher suggested that those with no ties to a religious community were more at risk, noting that the Coalition of Congregations is putting together a program for seniors, but cannot

reach those who do not belong to a congregation. Stan Nathanson asked if there was a hotline for seniors. The witness said that a suicide hotline exists, but it is not confined to the elderly, and that it gets very few calls from seniors. Due to problems such as hearing impairments, such hotlines might be underutilized. Ralph Mays asked about the problem of elder abuse. The witness pointed out that in her job she tends to see those older adults who are being cared for, and that abuse cases would tend to go to the emergency room.

Chris McCauley pointed out that there is a national organization called the Older Women's League (OWL). Joan Swain asked if older widows tend to view themselves as part of a family. The witness suggested that they may view themselves as loners, and isolated. They would be prime candidates for counseling programs. Shirley Guy noted that at the end of especially long relationships, older spouses may never have lived alone, and may not have the skills to become independent.

IV. Doris Topsy-Elvord

Commissioner, Long Beach Civil Service Commission

Recent figures show that approximately 14% of the Long Beach population is black, with the largest percentage of the group being between the ages of 16-30. Within the group, the largest religious affiliation is Baptist, with those belonging to the A.M.E. Methodist church comprising the smallest religious affiliation, but with the highest level of education.

The witness worked in corrections for many years, and has extensive experience working with children. She testified that in her experience, children were formerly able to earn money by obtaining National Youth Corps jobs in the summer months. In addition to this program, there were adequate recreation programs

in the parks. She believes the decline in these programs has led to the increase in graffiti and gangs, primarily because the programs gave children who participated a sense of hope.

She noted that there are many kinds of families in the black community. About 50% have 2 working parents, while approximately 19% are single parent families. Estimates indicate that about 2% of black families are headed by lesbian or gay couples with children from prior marriages or adoptions; within black lesbian and gay-headed families, nearly all the adults in the household hold jobs. Approximately 5% of black families consist of a male and female over 60 years old. Black older parents rarely live with their children or in nursing homes, and some live together in order to save on housing costs. Older African-Americans tend to be independent, having grown up in the old South. When they moved here, they were determined to create a better life, and most own their own homes--few live in apartments.

According to the witness, black families are unique. They bond to their in-laws, and the bond remains strong, even after a divorce. There is a sense in black families that older people should be cared for, when necessary, even when the older generation choose to live alone. Blacks tend to be neighborhood centered, and are tolerant of neighbors who work out of their homes, even if this causes some neighborhood distraction. They look out for one another's children. It has been the witness's experience that black children have a tremendous respect for mothers. Within the black community, information networks are stressed; blacks provide resources for one another within a genuine community that is often suspicious of outsiders.

The needs of black families tend to be the same as those of any families: low cost housing and daycare, recreation programs for children, particularly during the summer, tutorials, libraries and reading programs, police who are willing to work with the local

community, summer jobs for older children, drug education programs both for children and for adults, and counseling for parents experiencing stress.

She briefly discussed two programs operated by the National Council of Negro Women. The first is a single parent starting-over program, for those who haven't finished high school. The program provides funds for books, childcare, transportation, etc. The second program, newly instituted, is the Displaced Homemaker Resource Center. It is staffed five days a week, and refers its clients to available programs for learning new skills, obtaining counseling or temporary housing, etc.

Don Fancher asked the witness whether privacy tends to isolate the black community. The witness answered that while black families tend to keep family matters private, they are willing to participate in community resources, when such programs are available. Joan Swain noted that some blacks do not trust government agencies, relying on family networks, instead. She asked if this might be due to a lack of blacks in agencies, or a general distrust of agencies. The witness believed both to be true. In answer to a question by Dave Newell, the witness stressed the importance of summer programs which provide jobs, again emphasizing her point that jobs create a sense of hope among children, and give them an alternative to drugs. The witness pointed out that the National Council of Negro Women has speakers available to address community forums.

Ralph Mays asked if the witness thought gangs were a result of high unemployment among black youth. The witness agreed that gangs and drugs often seem like the only choices black youth have in the absence of jobs. Finally, Stan Nathanson asked if there was any participation with the Big Brothers association. The witness was unaware of any specific involvement, and suggested that such mentor programs would be valuable.

V. Olivia Herrera

Executive Director, El Centro Shalom

The witness began by noting that much Latino history is not well-documented. She has lived in Long Beach since 1943. She contrasted older families, whose members may have fought in one of this country's wars, with more recent arrivals, whose sense may have been shaped by some of the anger of the Chicano movement which began in the 60's and early 70's. The older families may feel more secure in their identity as Americans. As a whole, Latinos who consider themselves Americans owe their allegiance to this country. This does not, however, lessen their sense of loyalty to their own blood relations who may still live in Latin America; that family tie is an extremely strong one.

While the witness was brought up in an established Latino family, her employment as a social worker exposed her to the contrasting world of the barrios. This led her to start El Centro Shalom in 1977. The center currently serves about 40 families per week. The policy of the center is to allow the clients to decide who constitutes a family member, rather than imposing a definition on them. This eases the administrative burden of deciding which of many variously related or non-related persons, many of them undocumented workers, come within an administrative definition of the term. The center eases some of the burden caused by extremely long waiting lists at the department of Housing and Urban Development, which can sometimes be as long as 10,000 prior applicants.

El Centro Shalom tries to get families to be self-sufficient in the U.S. They try to address problems such as fear of immigration authorities, gangs, promiscuity and poor neighborhoods. The witness noted that many come to this country already possessing sufficient job skills, but that those skills may be underutilized,

either because of a lack of information, or prejudice.

Shirley Guy asked where the center refers people. The witness noted that there are not many agencies which address the needs of her clients. Language and prejudice are also problems.

VI. Harley Rubenstein
Disabled activist

The witness became disabled in 1975. He has worked at the Long Beach Disabled Resource Center, and pointed out that the disabled do not want special treatment. Architectural barriers and curbs without curb-cuts prevent the disabled from being able to lead lives equal to others.

According to statistics in the Long Beach Emergency Plan, the city, which is the fifth largest in California, has 360,000 residents. Of these, approximately 15-20% are estimated to be disabled, between 54-72,000 individuals. Many of these cannot use the usual emergency plans designed for able-bodied citizens. These plans were often designed without the disabled in mind.

One potential solution would be a computer network that identifies the disabled for 911 emergency services. A similar program could be devised for those who have a telecommunications device for the Deaf (TDD).

The witness also testified about problems which may arise when the disabled come in contact with police. Some disabilities may be mistaken for intoxication, or obstinacy. Police should be educated about this to avoid misunderstandings. Another potential problem is jail facilities which are not accessible. The witness testified that not only might cells be inaccessible, but that disabled inmates or visitors might not even have access to bathrooms. The

Law Enforcement Television Network in Orange County, in conjunction with the Newport Beach Police Department, produced a videotape titled "Interacting with Disabled People," in response to a recommendation by the Orange County Human Relations Commission, and the Orange County Independent Living Center.

The witness's final recommendations were to create a commission on disability in Long Beach, and a disability services department.

In response to a question by Dave Newell, the witness noted that some cities already have the 911 notification and TDD services he had testified about. Ralph Mays asked why the witness felt a disability commission would be useful, and the witness answered that it would provide efficiency in addressing the needs of the disabled community, and would provide a liaison to the disabled.

VII. Susan Matranga-Watson

President, Long Beach Lambda Democratic Club, Past Chair of Lesbian Mothers Group

The Long Beach Lesbian Mothers Group has over 250 members, and is one of the longest-running lesbian mothers groups in Southern California. The group has two primary goals: to provide an information network for lesbian parents, and to give their children a place to get together. The group also holds social and informational events. There is also a group for gay fathers in Long Beach. Both groups belong to the Gay and Lesbian Parents International Coalition, based in Washington D.C.

Lesbians become mothers in a variety of ways: children from former heterosexual marriages, artificial insemination, adoption and foster-parenting. Society does not always recognize homosexual parents. The witness noted that divorce has created a situation in

which many children have two fathers or two mothers. Gay and lesbian parents are different, if at all, only in that two fathers or two mothers live in the same house.

Homosexual parents face numerous legal and social barriers. A primary concern is health insurance where one partner works and wants to cover her partner's children on her insurance. While a heterosexual couple could get married and, in many cases, get the children insured, same-sex couples may not marry in California. Another problem is that the non-parent has no legal rights to custody of a child she may have been raising for years, if the biological parent dies. The children may thus go to someone who has had little, if any contact with them, disrupting the child's stable home life, disrupting the public policy to assure children as much stability as possible. Laws tend to assume that a child can only have one legal father and one legal mother. M a n y lesbians and gay men fear being open about their sexual orientation because it might lead to losing custody of their own children.

The witness testified that same-sex couples lead lives identical to most heterosexual couples, facing the same emotions and the same daily struggles. In this, they are just one more in a variety of family forms.

Like heterosexual parents, lesbian and gay parents need adequate childcare facilities. More important, same-sex couples need to have their relationships recognized. This can be accomplished in the city by recognizing domestic partnership as a legitimate family relationship. Finally, it is important that school personnel, including teachers, be educated about the diversity of all family forms. A central part of this education should address the predominant stereotypes about homosexual people, and particularly same-sex relationships, which do not correspond to the reality, not only of the lesbian or gay parents, but of their children.

Dave Newell asked why the state allows homosexual residents to adopt a child individually, but not as a couple. The witness noted the absurdity of the policy. Mr. Newell then followed up with a question about how same-sex couples could protect their rights if one partner dies. The witness suggested powers of attorney and well-drafter wills which clearly express the testator's intent that her partner raise her children, but noted that hostile and biased blood relatives may challenge such provisions, even if they have no relationship to the children at all. One solution to this might be to provide in the will that all support for the children should go only to the testator's partner.

Tom Housel asked if the witness was aware of any overt harassment from civil authorities. The witness testified about her own experiences with the county, where a social worker who initially viewed her as a lesbian parent with suspicion, was won over. She pointed out that homophobia and misunderstandings about homosexuality in general are pervasive in the school system. She also related an incident where she and her partner were leaders of a Brownie troupe for some time. When other parents discovered they were a lesbian couple, they were forced out, even though no other parents were available to serve as leaders. Stan Nathanson asked what local ordinances could address these problems. The witness stressed the importance of recognizing domestic partnership as a legal family relationship for purposes of insurance.

VIII. Nettie Coleman

Director, Disabled Resources Center

Marilyn Williams

Incoming President, DRC

Ms. Williams has been disabled since 1978. At that time DRC helped assist her transition to living an independent life as a disabled person. Prior to their assistance, she had been living

with a relative, where she experienced access difficulties. She wanted to live independently, and a counselor suggested DRC. The DRC made housing recommendations which were helpful. As important, she found the staff of DRC to be compassionate and understanding.

The DRC is a nonresidential independent living center. It is a nonprofit agency designed to assist independence. The majority of the board and staff are disabled. One of DRC's strengths is that it serves people with all disabilities. This makes it different from those agencies which provide services to only one particular disability. In addition, traditional rehabilitation agencies tend to keep their clients dependent on the institution.

The DRC was influenced by the civil rights movement. Like other minority groups, the disabled find discrimination intolerable, and are struggling simply to be treated equally with other citizens, with the same opportunities for housing, employment, mobility, commerce, etc. The newly-passed Americans with Disabilities Act is an important step toward the achievement of this goal. Ms. Williams noted that the city has a responsibility to all of its citizens, including the disabled.

The witness's primary concerns were in the areas of equal job opportunities, low cost accessible housing, and transportation.

Chris McCauley asked about the DRC budget. Ms. Coleman believed it was in excess of \$300,000, with a \$30,000 grant from the city. Dave Newell asked what the witnesses thought about a commission on disability. Ms. Coleman thought such a commission could empower the disabled community. Ralph Mays asked how Ms. Coleman thought the ADA would affect the community. The witness answered that it would almost certainly help in accommodating the disabled, and open up job opportunities.

IX. Linda Vizzini

Independent Living Coordinator, County Social Services Worker

The witness began by noting that no one lives a truly "independent" life, since all of us are highly interdependent. Statistics indicate there are 826 foster homes in Long Beach, serving 1600 children. Of these, about 41% are black, and 31% are hispanic. Three years ago, a foster child sued the county claiming his foster parents had not prepared him to live independently. As a result of that lawsuit, the county instituted the office of independent living coordinator.

The program assists children 16 or older who are living with anyone other than a legal parent. It contracts with local colleges, and provides that children will be picked up and taught skills necessary for independent living, such as budgeting, searching for housing, job skills, dealing with a checking account, obtaining a driver's license or state identification card, coping with medical necessities, etc. After the child completes the training, he or she may go to a skills center for more specialized training. Long Beach currently has no skills center in the city.

Current problems which need to be addressed include assisting foster children to file for financial aid for college. Many children are unaware of early filing deadlines. Children also need job training within the city of Long Beach after they have graduated from high school. Another problem area is independent housing for the children. Sometimes their only housing option may be their biological family, where old problems may continue to exist. Finally, the witness testified that scholarship money is always being sought.

Shirley Guy asked if Long Beach children were being sent out of Long Beach, and the witness testified that this often occurs. Once a child is placed with a foster family outside the Long Beach

area, visitation becomes difficult. The witness noted that successful visitation is the primary reason families ultimately reunite. Stan Nathanson asked about the problem in financial aid filing. The witness pointed out that a first step is help in the high schools, themselves. In answer to a question from Ralph Mays, the witness testified that there are problems when foster children get part-time employment when they lack job skills, or are suffering from emotional trauma. Chris McCauley asked about the average length of stay in a foster home. The witness had no specific figures, but guessed that the average might be around nine months. In answer to a follow-up, she testified that the program is funded by a federal grant, with original funds of about \$1 million. There are eight coordinators in the county. The nearest skills center to Long Beach is currently in Torrance.

X. Mitch Mason

**Supervisor, L.A. County Department of Children's Services
Emergency Response Program**

The witness has had ten years' experience in the area of child abuse. He has a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology and a Master of Social Work. He is currently working in the county's Department of Children's Services Emergency Response Program. This is an intake program for cases of potential child abuse. The program receives between 600-800 referrals from Long Beach per month, with the largest reporter being the school district.

The witness is also currently supervising a special program aimed at the families of babies who have been prenatally exposed to drugs. The goal of the program is to keep these babies with their families if at all possible. There are currently 34 families in the program.

Five issues need to be addressed. First, the school district

in Long Beach may lose child abuse funding from the state due to cutbacks. This is the largest child-abuse program in the city. The witness suggested the Commission become involved in advising the governor not to veto the funds.

A second issue is housing. The county cannot generally remove a child from a home for housing violations. Thus, many children must remain in housing that is dramatically substandard. It is important that city standards of adequate housing be set high enough to assure children will be brought up in adequate housing.

Third is the issue of law enforcement response. While the Long Beach police have been generally good, they sometimes do not have the resources to respond quickly to reports of child abuse. A study of police resource allocations could assure that child abuse reports are a priority. The witness praised the city's J car program.

Drug-exposed infants are a fourth problem. Long Beach appears to have no prenatal health care program for pregnant women who abuse drugs. Such women must be referred to Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, and may have to wait for months there to receive treatment. Prenatal care for these women and babies is of paramount importance.

Finally, the witness focused on SB 2669, which will change the way services are provided to families where a mother may be abusing drugs. The Child Protective Service would not be able to see a child unless a public health nurse had seen the child first. Without a dramatic resource allocation to public health nursing, serious problems could arise from this new scheme. The witness recommended the city monitor this bill closely.

Shirley Guy asked what the governor's reasons were for vetoing funds. The witness was unsure. In answer to a follow-up, the witness testified that the Harbor-UCLA drug baby program is funded

through Medi-Cal, Grants, and some county funds. Ralph Mays asked who had the authority to remove drug dependent children from their families. The witness answered that law enforcement officers, probation officers and social workers had such authority. When asked about the status of SB 2669, he answered that it had passed committee. Diana Bonta commented that the city health department currently turns away about 45 women per month who can't be provided with prenatal care. Those women who are at highest risk are often the ones turned away.

XI. Jim Heneise

**President, Citizens Advisory Committee on the Handicapped
Harry Taylor
Vice-chair, CACH**

CACH is an advisory commission in the city's charter. it oversees policy on the disabled, and attempts to improve access and assure a decent quality of life. The commission has no authority, and is merely advisory.

CACH has overseen the expenditure of \$50-100,000 per year in street improvements, including curb-cuts. It has insured that city operated park and recreation facilities are accessible, and recommended the city ordinance regarding blue curbs. CACH has been involved in the inclusion of the disabled in affirmative action programs, training and screening. It helped develop the Appeals Board, and was active in a program providing specialized transportation to city recreational facilities. It has been involved in youth and adult afternoon activities, oversaw the installation of special seating at the Terrace Theatre, worked toward a service discount for Simmons Cable, and now wishes to be a resource to this Commission.

Shirley Guy asked how CACH members are appointed. The witness

testified that they are appointed by the mayor and approved by the city council. Each member represents an organization, rather than a council district. Members may serve up to 8 years, but generally serve between 3-4 years. Ralph Mays asked if CACH would support a recommendation to make certain documents available to the handicapped, for example in braille. The witness agreed this could be a good idea, and suggested the two commissions work together. Joy Dowell inquired about an audible traffic-signal program. CACH has been discussing the program for Long Beach, but believes it may be a detriment unless it was installed at virtually all signals, since a blind citizen could become dependent and not realize a non-audible signal was at a certain corner.

In answer to a question by Tom Housel, the witness testified that accessibility has been improving at Long Beach airport. Stan Nathanson asked whether the public attended CACH meetings, or if CACH had an outreach program. The witness answered that CACH tries to get word of its meetings out through the press and newsletters, and has discussed having an ombudsman to the community. Dave Newell pointed out that legislation about hate crimes does not always include the disabled, and the witness agreed that the disabled should be included on the list. He pointed out that CACH has not had any reports of hate crimes against disabled people. In answer to a follow up, he noted that CACH has discussed suggesting a department for this disabled, but that such a department might duplicate DRC, the State Department of Rehabilitation, etc. In addition, such a department might take funds away from more badly needed programs.

Chris McCauley noted that there had been substantial resistance by officials to include new groups to hate crimes acts. Ralph Mays asked whether CACH had examined the ADA. The witness answered that CACH had been a longtime supporter of the Act, and pointed out that implementation would now be critical, since the Act only provides a framework for action. Shirley Guy asked about

the problem of emergency preparedness plans. The witness answered that CACH has dealt with the police and fire departments on this question. He noted that there are general problems of disaster preparedness for the general public, and that problems for the disabled would be at least as difficult.

*****THERE WAS NO TESTIMONY FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC*****

Public Hearing Testimony

July 12, 1990

I. Emma Ruchames

President, Council of Seniors of Greater Long Beach, Chair of Steering Committee of Links to Life/Medic Alert Program

There are approximately 80,000 seniors in Long Beach, many on fixed incomes. Those 65 and older comprise the second largest voting bloc in the area. They depend on social services agencies, which have been affected by budget reductions at both the federal and state level.

The city must pick up the slack in funding, since lower services may mean that seniors become homeless. Developers, who often prefer high-rise, expensive housing, seem to have more clout with elected officials than seniors do, and thus, affordable housing for seniors on fixed incomes turns into a major problem.

The lack of health care is another problem that must be addressed. Medicare and Medicaid have been in existence for 25 years, but millions still have no health care insurance. The Council of Seniors is lobbying for a national health care policy.

In California, those over 65 constitute just over 10.8% of the population, and that figure will rise to about 12.3% by the year 2000. If federal and state policies fail to address the needs of this growing population, the city, which is ultimately responsible for its citizens, must reconsider its priorities.

Dave Newell asked the witness what recommendations she had for

the city council. She noted that affordable housing, and specifically rent control, ought to be considered. She recommended a tax on developers that could go toward transportation, an additional problem for the elderly. She also noted that crime was a problem for seniors, and pointed out that there were currently unfilled vacancies on the police force. In response to a question by Chris McCauley, she said that lack of funds had hindered effective studies of elder abuse in Long Beach, but that many elders were also reluctant to come forward with information. She sees serious problems in outreach programs that require cooperation from the media, particularly the Press-Telegram. On the issue of adult dependent care, she was aware of hospital day-care programs which had been adversely affected by funding cuts.

II. Vora Kanthoul Huy

Associate Executive Director, United Cambodian Community

The UCC serves Cambodians and other refugee groups. They try to help refugees make the transition into American culture. There are between 30-40,000 Cambodians in Long Beach. About half came after 1983-84. This community is usually ignored by local and state government, which tends to recognize the Vietnamese immigrants. The UCC attempts to provide a wide range of services and preserve a sense of Cambodian cultural identity.

Gangs and violence continue to be problems for the Cambodian community. Many Cambodians suffer continuing psychological trauma from the Pol Pot regime they escaped from. In addition, a majority spent time in Thai refugee camps, waiting to be resettled. These camps were an especially difficult experience. According to the Press-Telegram, about 77% lived in camps for a year or more; 9 out of 10 refugees suffered the loss of relatives or friends through death or disappearance. Seven out of 10 adults over 50 suffer depression or trauma from these experiences.

This has led to a disruption in family structures, and has caused some younger Cambodians to form gangs. The witness suggested that helping these young people clarify their values and sense of cultural identity would aid in their ability to combat racial discrimination and prejudice in this country. In addition, their parents must be able to develop parenting skills.

In answer to a question by Dave Newell, the witness testified that therapy is available to Cambodian refugees at the Asian Pacific Mental Health Clinic, a county program targeted at the Cambodian community. But this is only one aspect of the solution, which must also address the problems of gangs, violence and drugs. The witness pointed out that it is important to distinguish between immigrants and refugees: immigrants usually come to the United States looking for a better life, having made a conscious choice to come here. Refugees escape a desperate situation, and have no time to prepare for a new country or culture.

Neil Van Steenbergen asked how the schools could help. The witness suggested both in-service training for teachers, and affirming to Cambodian children that there is nothing inherently wrong in being Cambodian. Chris McCauley asked whether there are any classes to help Cambodian parents address parenting needs; the witness was aware of one at the community college. In answer to a follow-up about gangs, the witness said that Cambodian gangs developed as a self-defense mechanism, but eventually became involved in drugs, and now, in addition to fighting gangs from other communities, also fight among themselves.

III. Catherine Ryan

Childcare coordinator, City of Long Beach

Mary Soth

Chair, Greater Long Beach Childcare Consortium

Catherine Ryan testified that, in 1987, in response to a mayoral task force, the city adopted its current childcare policy. In association with the Alliance of Businesses for Childcare Development, the Bottom Line--Child Care Solutions, Inc. was formed, a partnership between businesses, community non-profit agencies and the Long Beach Unified School District, designed to address the needs of availability.

Affordability remains a central issue. Care for infants and children under three costs approximately \$6,000 per year. Care for older children costs about \$2.00 per hour of care, an expenditure of nearly 10% of family income in many cases. The city has expressed a commitment to address these needs.

Some specific concerns include: alternative payment options; encouraging developers to include childcare facilities in future projects; continued coordination of programs between the private sector and the schools; an emphasis on stabilizing current providers, many of whom are excellent models; and encouragement of a national policy on childcare.

Mary Soth noted that childcare is a political issue. Politicians are aware that Americans are searching for a sense of family, and that most social problems relate back to the family. By the year 2000, about 70% of children will have a working mother. Employers are beginning to be aware that they have a stake in this issue, since the children growing up now will be the workers of the future, and childhood experiences affect children when they become adults. Statistics indicate that up to 40% of women in the

workforce are married to men who make less than \$15,000 per year.

The President has said that he believes childcare is an important issue. The witness emphasized that the workplace and the family are interdependent issues--both must be addressed together. Childcare is the fourth largest cost in any family budget, after housing, food and taxes. Part-time workers are especially affected, and must be a priority of any program.

Shirley Guy asked about the school districts childcare waiting list, which the witness testified was over 800 children. Dave Newell inquired about the city's progress in implementing the recommendation of the mayor's task force. Mary Soth noted that the creation of her position--Childcare Coordinator--was one of the recommendations. She noted that easing restrictions on childcare providers ought to be explored further. In answer to another question from Shirley Guy, Mary Soth distinguished between afterschool recreation programs and childcare, and noted that the latchkey program run by the department of parks and recreation is only a recreation program, not a childcare service.

IV. Bill Storey

Director, Human Resources and Affirmative Action, City of Long Beach.

The city employs about 5,205 people, 4,139 full time, and 1066 part time. 37.7% are ethnic minorities, 34.2% are female. 65% are married with dependents, 27% are single employees with dependents. Last year, the city required documentation of all family dependents, and dropped over 900 ineligible dependents from employee coverage. This was a cost-containment measure.

The city provides three health insurance programs and two dental programs, which are available to "eligible dependents."

This term is defined to include an employee's legal spouse, unmarried natural, adopted or step-children, unmarried disabled children, and unmarried foster children covered under legal custody.

The city also provides one day of paid sick leave per month for full-time employees. An employee may use up to 24 hours of paid sick leave per year for caring for ill or injured members of the immediate family living in the household. An employee may also use three days of paid bereavement leave when a member of the immediate family dies or is critically ill. A year of unpaid leave is available for non-medical leave.

Employees are allowed to create flexible work hours in most departments to accommodate family needs. The city is studying flexible benefits programs.

Dave Newell asked about expanding the definition of eligible dependents to include legally defined domestic partners, since lesbian and gay employees with lifetime partners cannot become one another's legal spouse, yet are one another's family members. The witness testified that this had not been considered, and that no one had yet formally proposed it as a solution to this problem. Ralph Mays asked about the progress of the city's affirmative action program. The witness said that the program was on schedule in the second year of a three year program. Over the last year, about 50% of new hires were minorities.

In answer to a question by Alan Lowenthal, the witness answered that the city does not keep records of the number of disabled employees. Shirley Guy asked about the city's maternity leave policy. The witness answered that pregnancy is treated under the policy covering disabilities. Paternity leave is available only if an employee can be spared from his department. Chris McCauley asked how long the city had used the current list of

eligible dependents, and the witness said it had been the same for at least the nineteen years he has been employed by the city. The definition of "immediate family" is apparently broader than the definition of "eligible dependents," in that it includes more distant blood relations, such as grandparents, and that the definition has changed over the years as a result of bargaining in union negotiations. The witness noted that a comprehensive workforce survey has not been conducted in recent years, and current records should be updated through such a survey. Finally, he testified that the city's counseling program is internal, with employees ultimately referred to outside agencies. This has been the system since the '70's, and employees seem to be satisfied with it, although some, such as police officers, refuse to use the system because of the confidentiality problems inherent when internal personnel are privy to this kind of personal information.

V. Ralph Laudenslayer

Superintendent of Senior Services, City of Long Beach

The witness is responsible for overall services to seniors in Long Beach, throughout the city. He distinguished three categories of seniors: the young-old, the old-old, and the very old. Each has its own needs. According to the 1980 census, there are 69,000 seniors in Long Beach 60 or older, about 17-18% of the population. Of those, over 5000 are living in poverty. The elderly are of all ethnic groups, but the witness noted that hispanics seem to have a lower proportion of elderly than other groups, a statistic that has not been addressed. He stressed that as the baby-boom generation ages, the "youth culture" will give way to a "senior culture."

Looking to the year 2000, he mentioned several problems which must be considered. Seniors have multiple problems, including finances, health, housing, etc. A program for case management should be put in place to address all problems, and prevent

institutionalization, if possible. Mental health problems are also critical, including Alzheimer's disease.

Public awareness of the elderly, transportation, money management and day care services are also problems that currently exist. Respite care for family members is also a problem. Corporations such as Stride-Rite now have programs which provide intergenerational care. Seniors who are able to live on their own may benefit from homemaker services, independent living centers, or cooperative housing for retired citizens. Long term health care and health insurance are always major concerns.

The Long Beach Senior Service Center is the flagship for senior service in the city. It provides a wide range of services. But a network is important. The APA (Agencies-Programs on Aging) consists of 40-45 agencies which meet once a month at the center to provide such a network. This kind of interagency cooperation is extremely important to provide effective services.

Family therapy and respite programs will become increasingly important. Intergenerational programs sponsored by employers can address the needs of many families. Programs may also be developed to utilize the skills and training of the elderly. The witness noted that a five-year plan to decentralize services is being considered.

Ralph Mays asked about the problem of elder abuse. The witness called this a hidden problem, and noted that he had recently received a report of a possible abuse case. Don Fancher asked if a national health care policy would be possible. The witness noted that the Council of Seniors was committed to this goal. Chris McCauley followed up on the problem of elder abuse. The witness said that a procedure manual had been developed on how to report abuse cases. The center is an educational resource, and hotlines may be a possible answer. The witness said that the

center's clients are disproportionately white and english-speaking, and recommended outreach programs, where necessary, to minority communities.

Alan Lowenthal asked about the reasons for a decentralization program. The witness said it was clear that the center provided the vast majority of services to seniors in the city, and many had to drive long distances to get there. The city council and the county provided funds for facilities in outlying areas of the city, and the five year plan lays out the details for this expansion and staffing. Joan Swain asked about transportation. The witness said that while vans had been donated, drivers and liability insurance are serious problems, and sometimes are well outside the center's budget. In answer to a question from Chris McCauley, the witness testified that the center underserves non-english speaking communities, people of color, and elderly lesbian and gay citizens. Finally, Joy Dowell asked if doctors are required to report elder abuse, like they have to report child abuse. The witness testified that this was a legal requirement that doctors must follow.

VI. Bernie Sanchez
Community Activist

Gangs are a crisis that is out of control. The witness has had experience over the last 20 years dealing with gangs. The primary means of dealing with the problem should be communication, not harassment or brutality. More important, it is important for those who wish to address the problem to go to the streets; gang members will not go to community services, so the services must engage in an active outreach plan.

The witness has seen that gang members can change with appropriate counseling. It is his experience that crowded family conditions often lead to kids joining gangs. He has seen many

instances where gang members are not satisfied with being in the gang, and are looking for help in getting out.

Tom Housel asked what kind of incentive would work with gang members. The witness stated that employment would help, but that a key issue is educating parents, who are often ignorant of gang activity or membership. Joan Swain asked if a small-business hiring program would help. The witness agreed this might be of some assistance, but that red tape is always a hindrance. Ralph Mays asked about addressing the mind-set of gang members, who often can't picture any life outside the gang. The witness said that that is the reason face-to-face dialogue with gang members and leaders is so important. Chris McCauley asked how the witness deals with parents. The witness said that many parents are not aware that gangs are a bad influence, or even that their children have joined gangs. The witness ultimately suggested that the city provide funds for people who are willing to go into the community to do the kind of direct work he is doing.

VII. Tom Plell

President, Intentional Association of Machinists #777

Childcare has been a critical issue for unions since 1977. Health care continues to be the number one concern of union members. The cost of insurance affects everyone. All employees, single or married, pay the same amount into the health care system, yet may receive widely disparate benefits. The city must recognize the changes occurring in the family, and address them. The witness cited the city's narrow definition of "eligible dependents" as an example of a problem that has arisen because the city continues to operate on assumptions about families that have not been true for years.

The city's removal of 900 people from its insurance benefits

program did not reduce the cost of insurance to the remaining employees. Demographic figures cited by the city are misleading. The 1980 census is not the most recent data available--private researchers do demographic studies all the time. About half of all women with children under six now work, an issue that must be addressed. Women are no longer subservient members in dominant male households, but prejudice continues to work against them in the workplace. Many women also work in part-time positions, and receive no benefits. It is possible the city of Long Beach is more interested in saving money than in caring for the family needs of its employees.

Dave Newell asked about the union's position on domestic partnership benefits. The witness said that that is clearly within the area of broadening the definition of family. Long Beach has consistently been reluctant even to discuss this issue with unions. Tom Housel asked if it would look bad if the city changed the definition of family to include domestic partners. The witness said that this was an issue beyond politics. Public officials are entrenched in old ways, and dislike changes. In addition, it is cheaper for the city to exclude certain families from coverage, and let them subsidize other family forms.

VII. Thomas F. Coleman

Member, State Task Force on Changing Family

The witness first stressed the importance in aggressiveness in pursuing the issue of domestic partnership. It is an emerging concept, and many people may be unfamiliar with it. It is therefore important to define what domestic partnership is.

The term was apparently first used in 1982, in a proposal to the City of San Francisco, without specific definition. It now

appears in various city ordinances and employment benefit plans. For most legal purposes, domestic partners are two adults, regardless of gender, who live together and function as a family unit, even though not married or related by blood to one another. "Life partner" and "unmarried partner" are also terms which come within this definition.

In 1988, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that there are 4.2 million unmarried partner households in the U.S., though this is probably an undercount. The 1990 Census has included the category of unmarried partner on the census forms, and this may help to provide a more accurate count of the group, although there was little publicity of this issue prior to the census. Estimates indicate that about 7% of the households in the Los Angeles area are domestic partnerships.

Domestic partnerships cut across all traditional demographic lines of race, ethnicity, religion and sex. Couples form domestic partnerships for a variety of reasons. Same-sex couples cannot get legally married; young opposite sex couples are often reluctant to make a marital commitment without first living together; those who have divorced may be unsure if they want to marry a new partner; older couples, and those who are disabled often lose benefits if they marry.

Discrimination against unmarried couples is evident throughout the workplace and the marketplace. A recent Los Angeles City Attorney Consumer Task Force on Marital Status Discrimination found instances of discrimination in a wide variety of areas. While this is illegal under California law, discrimination based on marital status is not often enforced.

Some municipalities and other employers now include domestic partners as part of their definition of "family" for benefits purposes. The cities of West Hollywood, Seattle, Berkeley, Los

Angeles, Santa Cruz and New York all offer some benefits to an employee's domestic partner. Some extend health care benefits. Figures from Los Angeles and Berkeley suggest between 5-8% of employees will take advantage of such benefits. Moreover, there appears to be no ground for the fear that including domestic partners in the definition of family will have adverse effects on the costs or stability of existing benefits plans which had previously excluded this family relationship. Those who have such relationships have been more willing to enforce their rights as workers who have been denied benefits due to an unnecessarily restrictive definition of family. 200 employees in Portland, Oregon have recently filed a lawsuit to challenge the city's definition of family, which excludes domestic partners.

The witness made several recommendations regarding Long Beach's employee benefits plan. He first noted that the section dealing with Sick Leave allows an employee to take time off for a doctor's appointment, but not to care for a family member. The section leaves the term "member of the immediate family living in the household" undefined, referring to a nonexistent definition in the Bereavement Leave section. The Bereavement Leave section includes an extensive list of relationships, including in-laws, foster children and step-children, but does not include domestic partners. The unpaid Extended Leave benefit contains no definition of "dependent" and should specifically include domestic partners.

Health and Dental care benefits, among the most important of all benefits, should also include domestic partners, with an appropriate and legally enforceable definition. The city of San Francisco is currently considering extending health benefits to unmarried children up to the age of 24, regardless of whether the child is in school, in order to recognize the reality that economic circumstances often force children to continue living at home after age 18. The witness also noted that Long Beach employees' credit union could legally include domestic partners in its definition of

family.

The proposed survey of the city's workforce should be overseen by the commission, to assure that questions asked about domestic partnership are included, and that they are appropriate. Such questions should be specific enough to assure employees know if their relationship is a domestic partnership, yet sensitive to those employees who wish to maintain their privacy. If the city's survey does not adequately address these areas, the commission should consider its own survey.

Alan Lowenthal asked about state-funded institutions. The witness noted that committees are forming at state schools, such as UC Irvine, to make domestic partnership proposals to the state. He pointed out that domestic partners pay taxes like all other citizens, and ought to have access to equal benefits. In response to a question from Shirley Guy about the local school district's ability to define "household member," the witness said that local districts have discretion to define family for their own purposes. Dave Newell asked about problems funding domestic partner benefits. The witness said the small employers, such as the city of West Hollywood, had experienced difficulties in providing insurance benefits, and had solved them by self-insuring up to certain limits. Larger employers, though, such as Long Beach, have greater leverage with insurance providers, and could more easily negotiate domestic partner benefits. He noted that some benefits, such as bereavement leave, are extremely low-cost, and are used only rarely, in extremely important situations. Benefits like sick leave, which are more often used, would not cost the city any more than it currently pays, since those employees with domestic partners take the days off anyway, but are encouraged to lie under the present system. If the definition of family were changed, employees would not take more days, they would just be honest about the time they do take off.

IX. Juan Navarrette

Personal testimony

The witness related his story as a domestic partner. He had a nine year relationship with his lover, Leroy. They had their own home in Long Beach, celebrated holidays together, travelled, and felt they had a family commitment to one another. In 1989, Leroy was involved in an accident that put him in a coma for three days, and resulted in severe brain damage.

Juan telephoned Leroy's brother in Maine, to let him know Leroy was in the hospital. Juan visited Leroy every day, and attended to the emergency details of Leroy's hospitalization. When Leroy's brother arrived from Maine, he took over Juan's position, and treated Juan as if he had no relationship to Leroy at all. He got a court order appointing him conservator of his brother, and excluded Juan from all decisions about Leroy's care. The brother broke into Juan and Leroy's home and seized documents and other items that belonged to Juan and Leroy, and took several of the men's pet dogs. The brother then had the locks changed, and tried to exclude Juan from his home.

The brother had Leroy moved from the hospital to a nursing home without consulting or informing Juan. When Juan called the hospital, he was told by an employee that Leroy was no longer there. The employee said there were orders not to tell Juan where Leroy had been moved to. Juan managed to get back into his house, and discovered a bill from the ambulance company which had moved Leroy. The bill included the name and address of the nursing home. Juan went there, and a nurse informed him that she was under strict guidelines to prevent him from seeing Leroy, since Juan was not a member of Leroy's "family."

Juan then sought legal assistance. He obtained an attorney, who filed for a court order permitting Juan to visit Leroy in the

nursing home. The attorney called Leroy's brother's counsel, to inform him that there would be a hearing before the judge, and only then learned that Leroy had already died. Leroy apparently had no intention of informing Juan of the death of his lover. The body was moved to Maine, and Juan had no opportunity either to see Leroy one last time, or to attend the funeral.

Tom Coleman commented on this testimony. He noted that it was a case where the system which Juan and Leroy depended on to protect their relationship did not do so. He noted that it is quite normal for couples to avoid making out wills, obtaining durable powers of attorney, etc. It is thus important for courts and hospitals to pay particular attention to the relationship when appointing a conservator or permitting visitation, to see that they are being sensitive to the patient's choice of a relationship, rather than blindly permitting a hostile family member to disregard the patient's intimate life partner.

X. Doreen Cheseboro

"Together We Can--A Single Parent Project"

Stenna McMullen

Project Director

Doreen Cheseboro--The Single Parent Project arose out of a program called "Starting Over," designed to serve Jr. High School teen mothers, and single parents in the school district. The program had minimal support from the start, and evolved into the Single Parent Project.

Stenna McMullen--The project operates on a budget of \$38,000/year, and barely survives on that amount. She is the only full-time paid staff person, a heavy burden for one person.

The program consists of two weekly support groups, a life

skills workshop, vocational assessment program, and some childcare and transportation vouchers. The project contracts with other groups where necessary, such as the extremely important Mentor program. The witness noted that Huntington Beach has a highly successful program, called Project Self-Sufficiency, which is jointly funded by the city and the federal government. That program interviews applicants to find out if they are sufficiently interested in becoming self-sufficient. Successful applicants are given one of 60 city housing certificates, two years to complete their training, and must attend mandatory support groups, and meet regularly with an assigned mentor. The program is very successful, and should be a model for Long Beach.

Long Beach can assist the Single Parent Project in approaching the Huntington Beach model. The project needs childcare funds, to permit the parents to complete education and training; job training programs that address the needs of single parents; and transportation and housing assistance.

Tom Housel noted that part-time workers suffer a penalty in that they are not eligible for benefits. The witness said that this is a continuing problem, and that such penalties should be addressed.

PART TWO

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS ABOUT FAMILY DIVERSITY

Note: The following articles and publications are cited directly in the notes to the full text of the report.