

AASP American Association for Single People
Protecting the rights of single people, unmarried couples, and nonmarital families

To: Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Speaker of the Assembly

From: Thomas F. Coleman
Executive Director

Re: Support for More Inclusive Domestic Partner Bills;
No Exclusion of Unmarried Blood Relatives

Date: February 6, 1999

Thank you for spending time with me at the Job Fair to speak about the domestic partnership legislation pending in the Legislature.

I am pleased that you will support the inclusion of blood relatives in the protections of these bills. Thank you for offering to send a letter to each of the authors urging them to remove the blood-relative restriction.

As I mentioned to you during our conversation, and as the materials I provided to you explain, there is no cost associated with any of these three bills.

Senator Murray's bill, SB 75, will not cost the taxpayers any money. It provides for a registry which is funded by the registration fee that domestic partners will pay. The legal protections afforded to registrants – hospital visitation, use of the statutory will form, and participation and priority in conservatorship proceedings – have no cost. They are humanitarian protections that should be afforded to all domestic partners, including unmarried adults who are blood related.

Assemblywoman Migden's bill, AB 26, also costs the taxpayers nothing. It does not mandate employers to provide benefits. It only mandates insurance companies to offer domestic partner health coverage to employers who voluntarily decide to give employees such benefits. There is no cost to insurance companies and HMOs because they can charge for the coverage, just as they now charge for spousal or dependent coverage.

Assemblyman Knox's bill, AB 107, also has no cost. It does not mandate any employer to provide benefits. It merely authorizes PERS to administer domestic partner benefits should any state agency or participating local government employer voluntarily decide to adopt such a plan.

Let's make California a model for the nation with an inclusive definition of "domestic partnership." Such a move will also significantly reduce religious opposition. The Catholic bishops are on record that they will withdraw opposition from domestic partnership legislation so long as blood relatives are included. This is an example of how the "politics of inclusion" can work.

Please send me a copy of your letters to the authors of these bills. Again, thank you for your offer of assistance.