

LOS ANGELES TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT - Homosexuality

By

ADELE STARR
Task Force Member

To: THOMAS COLEMEN, Esq.
June 1, 1987

During this past year, this Task Force has investigated the many kinds of problems that exist in the gay/lesbian community in the City of Los Angeles. Many witnesses have been heard and reports have been submitted. There are countless stories of harassment, both physical and verbal, substance abuse, attempted suicides and actual suicides. Testimony was given about discrimination in employment, in health facilities, in insurance companies and in housing. We heard of the tragedies that hit two families of high school students.

Not only are these problems of the gay/lesbian community, but also of the community-at-large; that is, because gays and lesbians are also a part of every minority and part of the majority community as well. They comprise about 10% of the population, or to put it another way, about one out of four so-called "traditional" families has a ~~gay~~ lesbian family member. This figure is based on 9% , using the 2.72 nuclear family unit.

Although one in four families has a gay/lesbian member, the family is usually unaware of this. Often the gay/lesbian member is afraid to come out to his/her family. Already receiving prejudice and rejection in the community-at-large, he/she is afraid of being rejected by the family. Sometimes, the gay/lesbian person does come out to the family and is accepted by the family. The result then is that the whole family goes into the closet for fear of embarrassment at best and violence at worst from society at large.

The result of individuals and families staying in the closet is that the misconceptions about gays and lesbians are self perpetuating.

The misconceptions and stereotypes, leading to fears and prejudices, remain fixed in people's minds and in our society; and the cycle of misinformation, leading to fear and prejudice, leading to further misinformation, continues....

The best way to break this vicious cycle is through education.

Dean Weddell's report examines the Family Life Education programs in the State of California and in the City of Los Angeles, and contains many recommendations. In this report, I am adding some of my observations and recommendations. Dean Weddell's report indicated that the City of Los Angeles is already teaching about homosexuality at the junior high level. That is a good start. However, by the age of 10, children's prejudices are well formed. Also, the junior high students are greatly influenced by peer pressure and peer pressure at that level is geared to bring out the worst in the students. Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that consideration be given to begin studies about homosexuality at an earlier age. In the meantime, IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the brochure, NAME CALLING(heterosexism/Homophobia) published by Equity Institute, Inc., Box 458, Amherst, MA 01004, be used as an educational tool and that it be distributed to all students on junior and senior high campuses.

Dean Weddell's report further indicates that about 60 teachers in Family Life Education programs have been trained so far and another 60 will start training in the near future. It seems to me, that at that rate it will take at least a decade to educate the teachers who in turn will be educating the students.

It is also apparent that the misinformation about homosexuality is prevalent in almost all people. This would include staff, faculty and other personnel in the schools of Los Angeles.

Furthermore, within the traditional family unit, there are children who are gay or lesbian and who will not become aware of their sexual orientation until puberty or later. Most of them are being brought up by loving, responsible parents, who nevertheless, are very misinformed about homosexuality. In many households, children hear almost daily from these loving parents disparaging remarks about homosexuality. In other households, the word "homosexual" is unheard of and never mentioned. All these parents would do anything to make sure that their children have a secure, safe and loving childhood and yet these parents are completely unaware that they may be raising a child who is gay or lesbian and is afraid to speak to them about his/her feelings of being different.

As the mother of 5 grown children, one of whom happens to be gay, I raised my children in such an environment. It never occurred to me or my husband that one of our children could be homosexual. Also, as a co-founder of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, (aka Parents FLAG), and active in the parents movement for the past 13 years, and current President of the Federation of Parents FLAG (75 groups), I have known first-hand of the suffering and despair that families have had upon learning that they had a gay/lesbian child. I have also been witness to the progress families have made in learning to understand their gay/lesbian child. As parents, we knew our children were fine, honest, responsible citizens, but we did not understand their sexuality.

As we learned the truth about homosexuality, we realized that we do not have a problem. The problem is that of a misinformed society. The solution is in education.

In the schools, it is not only the gay or lesbian student who suffers. It is also the student who has a gay father or a lesbian mother and is afraid to tell anyone of his/her peers. It is the sister or brother of a gay or lesbian who also is confused and cannot handle the situation. Even the well informed student, one who understands homosexuality, is afraid to speak out on behalf of a gay person for fear of alienation and harassment of peers.

In order to change attitudes and bring understanding to the entire community, education on a broader scale is needed. We need education of parents, educators, social service workers, counselors, health professional and workers, relatives, friends and neighbors. Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that Adult Education Classes dealing with Homosexuality be mandated in the high schools of the City of Los Angeles. A Health and Safety Task Force should be established to develop a course outline which schools could use. The course outline should include knowledge and sensitivity in dealing with the subject of Homosexuality. Paula Starr, my team mate, has recommended the need for Adult Education Curricula in dealing with culturally and socially diverse cultures. Homosexuality could be part of such a program. However, I believe the subject of Homosexuality requires a module of its own.

In addition to the proposed program dealing with the subject of Homosexuality, IT IS RECOMMENDED that a separate module be prepared to teach a course in Adult Education Classes on Sex Education. This

course would include a study of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop in his report to the public on AIDS on October 22, 1986, recommended the teaching of both homosexuality and sex in the schools starting as early as the elementary level. The presumption he may have had is that adults are well informed already. We know that it is not so.

Courses in Homosexuality and in Sex Education are necessary for adults as well as for children, inasmuch as most adults never had any education on either subject, except what they may have learned on their own. If adults were more knowledgeable in these subjects, they would not fear their children being taught. Knowledge would remove the fear.

In preparing the modules for Homosexuality and for Sex Education programs, IT IS RECOMMENDED that leading authorities from various related professions (medicine, health, counseling) and from the gay/lesbian community and from Parents FLAG, be invited to speak to the classes. Where speakers are unavailable, audio and videotapes could be used. Inasmuch as Parents FLAG has almost 15 years of experience in learning to understand Homosexuality, and is familiar with many of the latest books on the subject, and inasmuch as so little material of value has been available until recently, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the reading list contained in the Parents FLAG booklet, ABOUT OUR CHILDREN, be considered as recommended reading by all adults in the school system and by students, adult and minor, enrolled in Family Life Education Classes. Two of the books listed are text books that

should be required reading for all teachers in Family Life Education programs. The text books are: DEMYSTIFYING HOMOSEXUALITY, a teaching guide, by Human Rights Foundation, San Francisco, (Irvington Publishers, 1984) and HUMAN SEXUALITY, by Bruce M. King and Cameron J. Camp, (Pontchartrain Press, 1986, New Orleans). An excellent book for parents as well as teachers and counselors, is BEYOND ACCEPTANCE, by Art and Marian Wirth and Carolyn Griffin, (Prentice Hall, 1986). The authors are educators and counselors as well as parents of gay children.

The school and public libraries do not have many, if any, of these books. IT IS RECOMMENDED that these books, as well as Parents FLAG booklet, ABOUT OUR CHILDREN, be made available in all city school and public libraries. The subject of homosexuality is a current issue as the civil and human rights of this oppressed minority are discussed today. This subject should be and probably is discussed in Social Studies classes today. In order to be able to have thorough discussions, students and teachers need access to a variety of educational materials. The libraries should serve that purpose.

It is apparent that although some programs are now being implemented, it will take many years for any effective changes in societal attitudes to occur. In the meantime, it is essential that students who are, or may think they are gay or lesbian, have some program in school that can help them to understand themselves and meet others like themselves, in a non-threatening environment.

Dean Weddell has written about Project TEN, the program developed and instituted by Virginia Uribe at Fairfax High School. IT IS RECOMMENDED that this program be established in all high schools in the City of Los Angeles.

Furthermore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that a directory be published listing social service agencies and resources available both to parents and to gay and lesbian children. If there now is a directory of some sort, agencies that serve the gay/lesbian community should be included.

In conclusion, it is my hope that the City of Los Angeles will be the model/^{for}implementing courses on Homosexuality and Sex Education in the schools; an example to the rest of the state of California and to the nation.

**TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY
TEAM REPORT ON DISABILITY**

**Submitted by
Carol J. Gill, Ph.D
on
July 6, 1987**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY PAGES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	ii

REPORT

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Defining Disability.....	1
Defining the Population.....	2
The Disability Experience.....	4
Disability and Family.....	6
AREAS OF CONCERN.....	9
Barriers in the Community.....	9
Public Transportation.....	10
Marriage Disincentives.....	12
Architectural Barriers.....	16
Violence Against Persons with Disabilities.....	17
Education and Training.....	21
Advisory Council on Disability.....	22
FOOTNOTES.....	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	27

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the major points of this paper is that disability is a forgotten or ignored minority status. When disability is mentioned, people often scatter. In that context, I must say that work on this project was not easy. The disability team ended up with only one working member. Further, no research student could be found to undertake work on the subject. The moments of isolation I experienced while developing this report seem a fitting echo of the greater isolation experienced by disabled people in our society. Fortunately, however, other task force members have been encouraging, supportive, and interested. Tom Coleman has been generous, involved, and patient. I thank Chris McCauley for his ever-ready encouragement and Nora Baladerian for contributing the important section of this report dealing with violence against people with disabilities. I also wish to thank several people with disabilities who made this work possible: Anne Finger, Linda Knipps, Sue Ridenour, Richard Smith, and Barbara Waxman. A special thank-you goes to my primary consultant in most matters, Larry Voss.

BIOGRAPHY

Carol J. Gill, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist with a mobility disability. She has worked clinically with people with disabilities in rehabilitation settings and in her private practice. She is currently Clinical Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy at the University of Southern California and is a Commissioner on the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNSEL REJECT THE PREMISE OF "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AND, INSTEAD, ENDORSE MULTI-MODAL PLANS WHICH PROVIDE FLEXIBLE OPTIONS TO BEST SERVE THE NEEDS OF ALL CITY RESIDENTS, DISABLED AND NONDISABLED. FURTHERMORE, THE CITY SHOULD SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER JURISDICTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY BY ADOPTING A GOAL OF 100 PER CENT ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDS FOR SELECTING ADEQUATE ACCESS EQUIPMENT AND STRINGENT PROCEDURES FOR THEIR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT, ON BEHALF OF THE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF SEVERELY DISABLED PEOPLE LIVING IN LOS ANGELES, THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL FORMALLY RECOMMEND TO COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES THAT: a) LAWS PERTAINING TO GOVERNMENT AID PROGRAMS BE CHANGED TO ADDRESS THE FACT THAT SEVERE, PERMANENT DISABILITIES IMPLY THE NEED FOR STABLE PERMANENT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT; b) MEANS TESTING BE CHANGED TO ALLOW REASONABLE RESOURCE LIMITS AND TO LIMIT REASONABLY THE AMOUNT OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S EARNED INCOME WHICH IS DEEMED AVAILABLE TO A FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT DISABLED SPOUSE; c) SPOUSES WHO PROVIDE FORMAL ATTENDANT SERVICES TO DISABLED PARTNERS BE RECOGNIZED AS PERFORMING THOSE SERVICES AND, THEREFORE, ENTITLED TO REASONABLE COMPENSATION FOR THEIR WORK WITHOUT SUCH WAGES BEING CONSIDERED SHARED FAMILY INCOME; d) SPOUSES STOP BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXTRA HOUSING SPACE REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY A DISABLED PARTNER'S DISABILITY-RELATED EQUIPMENT OR ATTENDANTS; e) THE CONCEPT OF "HOLDING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY AS HUSBAND AND WIFE" BE REPEALED AS IT IS A DEGRADING AND HIGHLY DISCRIMINATORY INVASION OF PRIVACY; AND, f) ALL AID PROGRAMS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE INSTITUTE AN AMNESTY PERIOD FOR COUPLES WHO HAVE FAILED TO DOCUMENT A MARRIAGE FOR DISABILITY-RELATED REASONS, ALLOWING SUCH COUPLES TO PUBLICLY RECORD THEIR RELATIONSHIP STATUS IN SOME WAY WITHOUT PENALTY (drawing, perhaps, on precedents such as the Vesper Marriage Act in the Virgin Islands).

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY IN CORRECTING ITS PAST OVERSIGHTS IN THE AREA OF DISABILITY ACCESS, AND THAT THE COUNCIL RESOLVE TO ORDER THE CURB CUTS AND OTHER NECESSARY CHANGES NEEDED TO INSURE THAT DISABLED RESIDENTS OF LOS ANGELES AND THEIR FAMILIES HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE CENTER OF OUR CITY AND ITS GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL REQUEST THE LOCAL DEPARTMENTS WHICH COLLECT DATA ON CRIME VICTIMS TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON THE DISABILITY STATUS OF VICTIMS, INCLUDING THE CITY DEPARTMENTS OF THE POLICE AND THE CITY ATTORNEY, AND THAT COUNTY AGENCIES SERVING CITY RESIDENTS (SOCIAL SERVICES, CHILDREN SERVICES, SHERIFF, PROBATION, AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE) ALSO BEGIN TO COLLECT DATA ON THE DISABILITY OF THE CRIME VICTIMS THEY SERVE. IT IS ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY MAKE IT MANDATORY THAT MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS RECEIVE TRAINING IN DISABILITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A RESOLUTION, AND ALSO RECOMMEND THE SAME TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, THAT ALL APPROVALS FOR SHELTERS FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING BE DEPENDENT UPON AN ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. FURTHER, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES THAT TRAINING IN DISABILITY AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE TO ELDER ADULTS AND ADULTS NEEDING SUPERVISION BE REQUIRED FOR ALL COUNTY-APPROVED PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS; AND THAT THE COUNTY MONITOR THE SERVICES OF SUCH ATTENDANTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THEIR DISABLED EMPLOYERS, USING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS THE PRIMARY CONSULTANTS.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO STATE AGENCIES WHO LICENSE PROFESSIONALS SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THAT MANDATORY TRAINING IN DISABILITY BE INSTITUTED FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS LICENSED WITH THE BOARD OF MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (DOCTORS, INCLUDING PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS) AND THE BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE EXAMINERS (SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELORS).

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO THE LOS ANGELES BOARD OF EDUCATION (AND THAT THEY RECOMMEND TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION) THAT A STRONG TEACHING COMPONENT ON THE NATURE AND CULTURE OF DISABILITY K-12 BE INCLUDED IN THE MANDATORY CULTURAL CURRICULUM, AND THAT SUCH TRAINING BE REQUIRED OF ANCILLARY SCHOOL STAFF (i.e., principals and department heads); AND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AMEND ITS CURRICULUM IN THIS AREA TO MATCH THAT OF THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ISSUE A PROCLAMATION THAT THE CITY GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES DISABLED PEOPLE AS A DISTINCT MINORITY GROUP WITH EXPERIENCES, NEEDS, AND PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THEIR DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL STATUS, ANALOGOUS TO MORE TRADITIONALLY RECOGNIZED ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND RELIGIOUS MINORITY GROUPS; AND THAT IN THEIR CONSIDERATIONS OF ISSUES INVOLVING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ANY SUCH MINORITY GROUPS, COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL ENDEAVOR TO INCLUDED PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AMONG THOSE WHOSE RIGHTS MUST BE SAFEGUARDED.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISH THE CITY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY BY FORMAL ORDINANCE TO PROMOTE IT TO A POSITION OF AUTHORITY COMMENSURATE WITH THE NEEDS OF DISABLED RESIDENTS OF LOS ANGELES, THEREBY, ACKNOWLEDGING ITS PARITY IN IMPORTANCE WITH BODIES ESTABLISHED BY ORDINANCE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF OTHER MINORITY GROUPS.

DISABILITY TEAM REPORT

INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities compose one of the most socially oppressed groups in history. Integral to that experience of oppression is the fact that this group is so routinely overlooked when the needs of most minority groups are addressed. Organizations and individuals who strive to combat discrimination against ethnic, racial, and religious groups all too often fail to recognize the problem of discrimination against people with disabilities.

This oversight is due, in part, to the traditional view, held by many people, of what a disability is. Traditionally, disability has been defined in the context of the medical model as a deviation from physical normality. From this perspective, disability is a medically defined defect contained within the individual. However, people with disabilities have become increasingly vocal in criticizing this view.¹ It ignores, they assert, the importance of cultural factors in defining disability. It overlooks the crucial role society plays in facilitating or frustrating the efforts of disabled people to live fully in the community.

Defining Disability

Increasingly, then, people with disabilities are calling for a new view or definition of disability--one

based on a sociopolitical model.² From this perspective, disability is no longer seen as contained within the individual. It is seen as deriving from the interaction between an individual and the social environment. Specifically, from this perspective, disability can be defined as a human difference which is judged by society to be a significant disadvantage and to which society responds in some culturally characteristic manner.

This definition takes into account the cultural relativity of disability labeling. It addresses the fact that diversity in physique, cognition, or sensory functioning may constitute an identified disability in some environments but not in others. It also addresses the fact that a person who is different physically, cognitively, or perceptually may or may not be handicapped in functioning, depending on the obstacles society places in that person's path. Finally, this view of disability emphasizes the importance of social attitudes and public policies in shaping the disability experience.

Defining the Population

There are approximately 36 million people with disabilities living in our country.³ Although precise figures are unavailable, Los Angeles is home to a proportionately large disability population due to the city's size and number of resources, favorable climate, and the relative progressiveness of social welfare policies and

accessibility implementation. When we refer to people with disabilities, we include individuals with visible as well as invisible disabilities. Represented in this population are mobility disabilities, due to such factors as paralysis, weakness, pain, and amputation. Also included are sensory disabilities, such as blindness and deafness; emotional or psychological disabilities; and intellectual or cognitive disabilities, such as learning disabilities and mental retardation. Some people with disabilities have no identifiable functional deficit at all but are sufficiently different in appearance or manner to be judged disabled by society. This includes individuals with facial or skin deviations and people of unusual size or stature.

All people with disabilities share in common the fact that they are different from the norm in a way which complicates some basic life function. However, it is important to remember that the complication may not necessarily derive from the disability itself but may derive partly or solely from the response of the social environment to the individual's "differentness," as in the case of a person with a facial disability who is repeatedly denied jobs.

The Disability Experience

As is true for many groups in our society, the experience of people with disabilities is dominated by the day-to-day realities of economic, social, and political oppression. Although adequate statistical measures have been long overdue in studying the problems of this population, recent reports yield compelling and alarming information. In the United States, it has been estimated that at least one-third of all people with disabilities live in poverty.⁴ Relative to all other groups, disabled people have the highest rate of unemployment, and they experience the most discrimination in hiring and training.⁵ Despite the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Public Law 94-142 regarding the education of all children, disabled Americans are shamefully undereducated due to inaccessibility and segregation in educational settings.⁶

Discriminatory medical care has been a particularly serious, sometimes life-threatening, problem for people with disabilities. Public policies providing low-cost or free medical services are becoming more conservative and exclusionary. In California, the Governor has been working to cut Medi-Cal coverage of services which many disabled people feel are essential, such as dental cavity repair and outpatient psychotherapy, and has encouraged adoption of programs which would limit a Medi-Cal recipient's choice of practitioners (a frightening prospect for some individuals

whose uncommon disability-related problems are understood by only a small number of specialists who may not be providers under these programs). California has also led our nation in setting legal precedent in "right to die" cases involving disabled people, guaranteeing the right of severely disabled people to refuse life-sustaining treatment. In view of these two trends, it is not surprising that some disability leaders have observed that it is getting easier for disabled people to die but harder all the time for them to live.⁷

One of the most revealing measures of social oppression versus freedom for any people is the ease with which they are permitted to move about in the general community. Such liberty is severely limited for citizens with disabilities. Again, despite regulations prohibiting architectural barriers, builders still construct hospitals, restaurants, hotels, banks, office buildings, apartment complexes, libraries, governmental structures, and other public buildings lacking access for millions of Americans with disabilities. Despite government mandates for accessible public transit, most transit systems across our nation require people with mobility disabilities to use inferior, limited modes of transportation which segregate them from nondisabled citizens.

Perhaps less tangible but equally disturbing to citizens with disabilities are the countless incidents of interpersonal discrimination experienced each day. People

with disabilities have known a long history of persecution, including their exclusion from schools and other public places through the passage of "ugly laws"⁸ and the annihilation of hundreds of thousands of disabled people in the early months of the Nazi holocaust.⁹

Today, prejudice towards persons with disabilities is evident in the negative language often used by the public, even the news media and representatives of law and government, in discussing disability. It is manifest in the underrepresentation of disabled people in the revered institutions of our society. On a more personal level, it is expressed in the social exclusion and isolation imposed on people with disabilities both informally, in relationships, and formally, in the discriminatory policies of clubs, organizations, and personal services such as dating and roommate exchanges.

Disability and Family

Commonly held stereotypes regarding people with disabilities conflict with many of our cherished views of family life. People with disabilities are frequently seen as ill, dependent, incompetent, and perpetually child-like. They are rarely seen as potential husbands, wives, or parents. Nor are they perceived, on the other hand, as children who develop into effective adults, bringing joy and comfort to their parents through the years. Unfortunately,

the role society usually reserves for disabled people is that of the family burden.

Although it is hard for disabled people to resist believing and internalizing such pervasive stereotypes to some extent, countless do indeed become family partners, spouses, and parents. They do grow into competent adults who manage their own lives with or without assistance. They also have families--both families of origin and families which they create or adopt.

Types of families found in the disability community run the gamut. Many disabled individuals live in traditional nuclear families. Occasionally, they remain in their families of origin well into adulthood, relying on aging parents for assistance in living. More typically, people with disabilities leave their families of origin in adulthood to live independently or in a setting that provides assistance or supervision.

Many single people with disabilities live alone. However, sometimes single disabled people live with other disabled people as roommates or in groups, sharing resources such as housecleaning and attendant services as well as dividing household expenses. A very common situation is for a disabled person to live with an attendant or aide. Although the aide is a hired employee, some people with disabilities feel that their partnership with their aide constitutes a family. Also, for many people with

disabilities, a major source of assistance is a specially trained pet, such as a guide dog or companion dog. These animals are permitted by law to accompany their disabled owners in public places, and many disabled people consider such pets an integral part of their family system.

As previously mentioned, despite their social devaluation and isolation, not all disabled people remain single. All types of partnerships are represented in the disability community from platonic longterm commitments between friends to romantic co-habitations of all kinds to traditional marriages. As will be discussed later, these unions may occasion threatened or actual financial penalties due to the marriage disincentives contained in major policies affecting life with a disability.

Although society offers little support for the endeavor, either emotionally or financially, many people with disabilities have children. Limited research available on the subject suggests that, in general, people with disabilities are equal to nondisabled people in being effective parents.¹⁰ However all the environmental and attitudinal barriers to living faced by people with disabilities also have a negative impact on their family members, including their children.

While the last decade has been marked by the growth of the independent living movement for people with disabilities, many still live in institutions, particularly

those with severe disabilities or extremely devalued disabilities, such as cerebral palsy. Also highly represented in this group are disabled people from low socioeconomic groups and those lacking family support.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Although physical, sensory, learning, and emotional disabilities present inherent problems which stimulate the coping skills of people with disabilities, we are concerned in this report with the unnecessary problems imposed on disabled people by society. We are also interested in measures which the city of Los Angeles could take to facilitate life for its citizens with disabilities.

In acknowledging the major patterns of prejudice and discrimination faced by this minority group, it is evident that people with disabilities are surrounded by disincentives not only to marriage but to family life in general. As in the subject of aging, society fails miserably in addressing disability as a fact of living--a rather common fact, at that. A sad corollary to this is society's failure to acknowledge disability as a fact of family life. This is a failure which hurts everyone who has a disability or loves someone who does.

Barriers in the Community

When a person with a disability is given only second class access or no access at all to the community, that

individual's whole family suffers. A classroom with steps leading up to its doorway may seem to pose no barrier to a nondisabled child. However, if that child's mother uses a wheelchair to move from place to place, it may be impossible for mother and child to enjoy "open house" activities along with everyone else. When a deaf women goes to a public hospital to have a baby and no sign language interpreter is available to facilitate communications between her and the hospital staff, the experience of starting their family is indelibly marred for her and her partner. When a man wishes to take all his grandchildren to the park but his grand-daughter with spina bifida cannot board the bus with her brothers and sisters because the bus lacks a lift, that man is confronted with a sad family dilemma.

Public Transportation

As changes occur in the sources of funding for transportation, local jurisdictions, including the city of Los Angeles, have become responsible for the planning and delivery of public transportation services. Unfortunately, many jurisdictions are failing to plan for or safeguard equal access features for people with disabilities when designing their systems. The city of Los Angeles is no exception. For example, the downtown DASH system and the San Fernando-Sunland-Tujunga public dial-a-ride system were both originally designed without adequate access features,

and there are no lifts on the Fairfax Trolley for dignified, independent boarding by people with mobility disabilities.¹¹

Under the circumstances, the Los Angeles disability community has begun to express distrust in the city's commitment to equal access to public transportation. Not only are there remaining problems in the existing system but it appears that new aspects are being planned complete with barriers to their use by people with disabilities. Instead, more dollars are invested in expanding inefficient, separate, and highly limited para-transit systems for disabled citizens. The result is the encouragement of segregated and second-class transportation for people with disabilities.

Disabled experts who have studied the city's transportation options have called for the development of a broader, more flexible approach which would encompass rail, fixed route, deviated route, feeder systems, and shuttles as needed by all segments of the community, including persons with disabilities.¹² Such a plan includes the elements which make any transportation system more practical and convenient for everyone, disabled or nondisabled. It recognizes that disabled citizens are or can be a significant part of the riding public. Finally, it allows people with disabilities the same options for spontaneity and freedom of movement as other residents of the city.

In conclusion, on the issue of transportation, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNSEL REJECT THE PREMISE OF "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AND, INSTEAD, ENDORSE MULTI-MODAL PLANS WHICH PROVIDE FLEXIBLE OPTIONS TO BEST SERVE THE NEEDS OF ALL CITY RESIDENTS, DISABLED AND NONDISABLED. FURTHERMORE, THE CITY SHOULD SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER JURISDICTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY BY ADOPTING A GOAL OF 100 PER CENT ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDS FOR SELECTING ADEQUATE ACCESS EQUIPMENT AND STRINGENT PROCEDURES FOR THEIR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.

Marriage Disincentives

Many Los Angeles residents with disabilities rely on government aid programs to help them meet basic survival needs. Four of the most commonly used programs are:

- 1) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)--Social Security cost-of-living payments for people who are too disabled to work (It is funded by federal and state sources.);
- 2) In Home Supportive Services (I.H.S.S.)--funding administered through the county for personal attendant services;
- 3) MediCal--state health-care funding; and,
- 4) Section 8 Rent Subsidy--supplemental rent funding available under the Aftercare Program (federally funded but county administered).

Eligibility for these programs is determined through means testing, that is, the determination of the applicant's income and resources. Unfortunately, when a disabled person gets married, all of the income and resources of the spouse are "deemed" available to the disabled spouse.¹³ This immediately raises the officially determined means level of the disabled person, resulting in funding cuts or even termination of benefits. In essence, this procedure imposes a harsh penalty on any financially solvent person who falls in love with and wishes to marry a severely disabled person. As it stands, the law requires both partners to give up their means of financial security so they may sink together (and possibly with their families) into poverty. This brutal practice transforms marriage into the assumption of a burden.

Sadly, this law destroys the possibility of a much brighter and pragmatic alternative. For it is a widely known fact of medicine and sociology that people who are part of a stable love relationship or family tend to live longer and are healthier throughout life. Furthermore, it is commonly known in the disability community that family members and partners who are not "burned out" by impossible financial and time demands are most likely to voluntarily provide the most and best personal assistance to disabled loved ones. The laws regarding benefit eligibility and deeming are vicious because instead of supporting the

possibility of increased independence, physical health, and emotional well-being for disabled people, they insure poverty, isolation, and demoralization. Again, we have a flagrant barrier constructed by society against family life for disabled people. Again, second-class citizenship status is imposed on disabled people by a society which indicates that the basic rights to love and partnership are not rights for severely disabled citizens.

Consequently, people with disabilities and their loved ones suffer greatly. In some cases, the individuals involved try to ignore religious convictions and values about marriage, deciding to live together unmarried. Needless to say, this often puts another strain on an already challenging commitment. Also, it does not solve the difficulty, in that the law allows such couples to be considered married in practice if not by law, or "holding out to the community as husband and wife." In other cases, couples marry but keep their marriage secret. Such couples are not only deprived of the social and emotional benefits of expressing their marital commitment openly, but they also must live in realistic fear of exposure and severe financial penalty for their deception. These stresses threaten the happiness and integrity of countless relationships.

In view of these continuing abuses, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT, ON BEHALF OF THE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF SEVERELY DISABLED PEOPLE LIVING IN LOS ANGELES, THE LOS ANGELES CITY

COUNCIL FORMALLY RECOMMEND TO COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES THAT: a) LAWS PERTAINING TO GOVERNMENT AID PROGRAMS BE CHANGED TO ADDRESS THE FACT THAT SEVERE, PERMANENT DISABILITIES IMPLY THE NEED FOR STABLE PERMANENT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT; b) MEANS TESTING BE CHANGED TO ALLOW REASONABLE RESOURCE LIMITS AND TO LIMIT REASONABLY THE AMOUNT OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S EARNED INCOME WHICH IS DEEMED AVAILABLE TO A FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT DISABLED SPOUSE; c) SPOUSES WHO PROVIDE FORMAL ATTENDANT SERVICES TO DISABLED PARTNERS BE RECOGNIZED AS PERFORMING THOSE SERVICES AND, THEREFORE, ENTITLED TO REASONABLE COMPENSATION FOR THEIR WORK WITHOUT SUCH WAGES BEING CONSIDERED SHARED FAMILY INCOME; d) SPOUSES STOP BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXTRA HOUSING SPACE REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY A DISABLED PARTNER'S DISABILITY-RELATED EQUIPMENT OR ATTENDANTS; e) THE CONCEPT OF "HOLDING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY AS HUSBAND AND WIFE" BE REPEALED AS IT IS A DEGRADING AND HIGHLY DISCRIMINATORY INVASION OF PRIVACY; AND, f) ALL AID PROGRAMS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE INSTITUTE AN AMNESTY PERIOD FOR COUPLES WHO HAVE FAILED TO DOCUMENT A MARRIAGE FOR DISABILITY-RELATED REASONS, ALLOWING SUCH COUPLES TO PUBLICLY RECORD THEIR RELATIONSHIP STATUS IN SOME WAY WITHOUT PENALTY (drawing, perhaps, on precedents such as the Vesper Marriage Act in the Virgin Islands).

Architectural Barriers

As previously mentioned, when a disabled person encounters barriers to his or her community and its institutions, this is a potential barrier for that person's entire family. In the past year, Los Angeles' disability community has been particularly vocal in expressing outrage over Title 24 building access violations, specifically protesting the granting of certificates of occupancy on recently constructed public buildings which flagrantly violate access codes. With the support of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities as well as Deputy Attorney General Overton, the protest has been extremely effective. It has resulted in a public admission by the Department of Building and Safety of its culpability. More important, it has led to the proposed acquisition of forty staff people by the Department of Building and Safety to work on access enforcement. On March 24, 1987, the Los Angeles City Council voted approval of the plan which specifies the hiring of disabled Access Specialists, the establishment of a new Disabled Access Commission, and the appointment of a City Attorney Hearing Officer.¹⁴

It is hoped that this salutary resolution will prevent the further unnecessary construction of barriers to the built environment for disabled residents of Los Angeles and their families. It is also hoped that the City Council will demonstrate as much support for other corrections of

community barriers, such as the need for more curb cuts on street corners in the downtown area and the need for improved parking and access to government buildings, including City Hall.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY IN CORRECTING ITS PAST OVERSIGHTS IN THE AREA OF DISABILITY ACCESS, AND THAT THE COUNCIL RESOLVE TO ORDER THE CURB CUTS AND OTHER NECESSARY CHANGES NEEDED TO INSURE THAT DISABLED RESIDENTS OF LOS ANGELES AND THEIR FAMILIES HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE CENTER OF OUR CITY AND ITS GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

Violence Against Persons with Disabilities

In any examination of families with disabilities, the issue of violence must be discussed. All studies of violence against persons with disabilities, both children and adults, show that persons with disabilities are grossly overrepresented in the population of crime victims.

Among children, estimates of sexual abuse of children with disabilities range from four to ten times that of the nondisabled population.¹⁵ Children with disabilities are also greatly overrepresented in populations suffering physical abuse, physical neglect, medical neglect, emotional abuse, and emotional neglect. They are also involved with high frequency in satanic and cult rituals including

torture, sexual abuse, and murder. Children with disabilities are also frequently victims of hate violence, perpetrated by both children and adults, as documented in the Attorney General's Final Report of the Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Minority Violence.¹⁶

The frequencies of crime victimization referred to above are estimates. None of the crime reporting collection instruments, local, state, or federal, request information on the disability of the crime victim. The only known exception to this is the new version of the Investigation Form for Child Abuse in the State of California, under the auspices of the Department of Criminal Justice. This requests information on whether the victim of child abuse has a developmental disability.

Children with disabilities have a history of devaluation leading to the denial of medical treatment and, in some cases, starvation by doctor's order as well as the use of such children as involuntary research subjects to assess onset of death. Due to pervasive prejudice and devaluation of people with disabilities, including the devaluation of adults and children who are victims of crime, they often cannot receive redress or witness credibility in the criminal justice system. Yet adults with disabilities experience all types of violence more than the general population, including street violence: robbery, physical

S-405

assault, taunting, threats of physical violence, and homicide.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL REQUEST THE LOCAL DEPARTMENTS WHICH COLLECT DATA ON CRIME VICTIMS TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON THE DISABILITY STATUS OF VICTIMS, INCLUDING THE CITY DEPARTMENTS OF THE POLICE AND THE CITY ATTORNEY, AND THAT COUNTY AGENCIES SERVING CITY RESIDENTS (SOCIAL SERVICES, CHILDREN SERVICES, SHERIFF, PROBATION, AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE) ALSO BEGIN TO COLLECT DATA ON THE DISABILITY OF THE CRIME VICTIMS THEY SERVE. IT IS ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY MAKE IT MANDATORY THAT MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS RECEIVE TRAINING IN DISABILITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION.

People with disabilities are frequently assaulted in their homes at the hands of family members and personal care attendants, many of whom are paid for through county funds. This places disabled people in a double bind: The ongoing need for assistance in activities of daily living and life-sustaining support is frequently balanced against the prospect of continued abuse. Elder and dependent adult abuse legislation enacted recently will be legally helpful. However, shelter programs and other immediate protective interventions are not available to people with disabilities.

Neither the protective system nor criminal justice system is providing the protection it could due to the apparent lack of priority assigned to violence against persons with disabilities. Although there are notable exceptions, this attitude is prevalent in the criminal justice system as a whole as well as among the individuals who work in the system. Rape victims with disabilities, in particular, are discredited in law enforcement. Attitudinal problems include the belief that persons with disabilities are asexual and, therefore, cannot be raped. Another belief is that disability renders an individual incapable of making a credible identification of the perpetrator. Neither belief is true, but these issues and others must be corrected through training by the response system providers.

In conclusion, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A RESOLUTION, AND ALSO RECOMMEND THE SAME TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, THAT ALL APPROVALS FOR SHELTERS FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING BE DEPENDENT UPON AN ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. FURTHER, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES THAT TRAINING IN DISABILITY AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE TO ELDER ADULTS AND ADULTS NEEDING SUPERVISION BE REQUIRED FOR ALL COUNTY-APPROVED PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS; AND THAT THE COUNTY MONITOR THE SERVICES OF SUCH ATTENDANTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THEIR DISABLED

EMPLOYERS, USING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS THE PRIMARY CONSULTANTS.

Education and Training

Insuring that a larger segment of the public receives education regarding disability is, perhaps, one of the better ways to combat social prejudice and abuse against people with disabilities. In particular, two target groups are crucial: professionals who serve people with disabilities, and children in the school system. While the state requires many professionals to learn about high-risk groups for abuse, there is no formalized requirement in most professions to demonstrate adequate knowledge of greater disability issues before working intensively with disabled people and their families. Similarly, although children attending public schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District are exposed to a curriculum on cultural diversity, there is little or no acknowledgement of disability as a viable lifestyle or of disabled people as a large and important minority group.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO STATE AGENCIES WHO LICENSE PROFESSIONALS SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THAT MANDATORY TRAINING IN DISABILITY BE INSTITUTED FOR ALL PROFESSIONALS LICENSED WITH THE BOARD OF MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (DOCTORS, INCLUDING PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS) AND THE BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL

SCIENCE EXAMINERS (SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELORS).

Additionally, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND TO THE LOS ANGELES BOARD OF EDUCATION (AND THAT THEY RECOMMEND TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION) THAT A STRONG TEACHING COMPONENT ON THE NATURE AND CULTURE OF DISABILITY K-12 BE INCLUDED IN THE MANDATORY CULTURAL CURRICULUM, AND THAT SUCH TRAINING BE REQUIRED OF ANCILLARY SCHOOL STAFF (i.e., principals and department heads); AND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AMEND ITS CURRICULUM IN THIS AREA TO MATCH THAT OF THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Advisory Council on Disability

In 1974, Mayor Tom Bradley formed the Los Angeles City Advisory Council, expressing his desire to see disabled people as a class of citizens achieve full access to municipal services. The 45-member advisory council is partly self-elected, and partly appointed by the Mayor and the City Council. Over the past decade, this body has addressed many types of problems confronting people with disabilities who reside in Los Angeles as well as broader issues affecting all disabled people. Issues covered have included access, transportation, employment, housing, communications, and public attitudes.

Unfortunately, this group of dedicated and highly qualified individuals have experienced some recurring obstacles in their efforts to improve city life for disabled citizens. They report repeated difficulty in attempts to address the Mayor's office, the City Council, and the city Department heads. They are severely impeded by the lack of a working budget or staff services. They experience the genuine handicap of trying to grapple with the considerable problems of what is possibly the largest urban population of disabled citizens while having no formal mandate or support from city government to execute the task.

In view of this, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ISSUE A PROCLAMATION THAT THE CITY GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES DISABLED PEOPLE AS A DISTINCT MINORITY GROUP WITH EXPERIENCES, NEEDS, AND PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THEIR DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL STATUS, ANALOGOUS TO MORE TRADITIONALLY RECOGNIZED ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND RELIGIOUS MINORITY GROUPS; AND THAT IN THEIR CONSIDERATIONS OF ISSUES INVOLVING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ANY SUCH MINORITY GROUPS, COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL ENDEAVOR TO INCLUDED PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AMONG THOSE WHOSE RIGHTS MUST BE SAFEGUARDED. IT IS FURTHER RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISH THE CITY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY BY FORMAL ORDINANCE TO PROMOTE IT TO A POSITION OF AUTHORITY COMMENSURATE WITH THE NEEDS OF DISABLED RESIDENTS OF LOS ANGELES, THEREBY, ACKNOWLEDGING ITS PARITY IN IMPORTANCE WITH BODIES

ESTABLISHED BY ORDINANCE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF OTHER
MINORITY GROUPS.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Carol J. Gill, "A new social perspective on disability and its implication for rehabilitation," Occupational Therapy in Health Care, Vol. 4, 1987.

² Harlan Hahn, "Disability policy and the problem of discrimination," American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 28, 1985.

³ Diane Piastro, "Disabled are a large hidden minority," Long Beach Press-Telegram, December 23, 1986.

⁴ Frank Bowe, Handicapping America: Barriers to Disabled People, New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

⁵ The International Center for the Disabled, Survey of Disabled Americans, New York: Lou Harris and Associates, March, 1986.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Paul Longmore, "Aid in dying and the slippery slope revisited: An exchange of views," Conference on Legally Assisting Suicide, Stanford University, April, 1987.

⁸ Bowe, Handicapping America.

⁹ Mary Johnson, "Life unworthy of life," Disability Rag, Vol. 8, Jan./Feb., 1987.

¹⁰ Frances M. Buck and George W. Hohmann, "Parental disability and children's adjustment," Annual Review of Rehabilitation, Vol. 3, 1983.

¹¹ Sue Ridenour, "Needed improvements in public transportation," Testimony before the Task Force on Family Diversity, Los Angeles, CA, April, 1987.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Linda Knipps, "Disincentives to marriage for disabled people," Testimony before the Task Force on Family Diversity, Los Angeles, CA, March, 1987.

¹⁴ Bill Jordan, "The saga of access in L.A.," New World for Persons with Disabilities, Vol. 13, June, 1987.

¹⁵ Ellen Ryerson, Teacher training manual: Sexual exploitation of handicapped students, Seattle, WA: Seattle Rape Relief, 1983.

¹⁶ Attorney General's Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Minority Violence, Final Report, 1986, Sacramento, CA, 1986.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Attorney General's Commission on Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Minority Violence. Final Report. Sacramento, CA, 1986.

Bowe, Frank. Handicapping America: Barriers to Disabled People. New York: Harper and Row; 1978.

Buck, Frances M. and Hohmann, George W. "Parental disability and children's adjustment." Annual Review of Rehabilitation, Vol. 3, 1983.

Gill, Carol J. "A new social perspective on disability and its implications for rehabilitation." Occupational Therapy in Health Care, Vol. 4, 1987.

Hahn, Harlan. "Disability policy and the problem of discrimination." American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 28, 1985.

International Center for the Disabled. Survey of Disabled Americans. New York: Lou Harris and Associates, March, 1986.

Johnson, Mary. "Life unworthy of life." Disability Rag, Vol. 8, Jan./Feb., 1987.

Jordan, Bill. "The saga of access in L.A." New World for People with Disabilities, Vol. 13, June, 1987.

Knipps, Linda. "Disincentives to marriage for disabled people." Testimony before the Task Force on Family Diversity, Los Angeles, CA, March, 1987.

Longmore, Paul. "Aid in dying and the slippery slope revisited: An exchange of views." Conference on Legally Assisting Suicide, Stanford University, April, 1987.

Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women.
Survivor: Special Edition, 1986.

Piastro, Diane. "Disabled are a large hidden minority." Long Beach Press-Telegram, December 23, 1986.

Ridenour, Sue. "Needed improvements in public transportation." Testimony before the Task Force on Family Diversity, Los Angeles, CA, April, 1987.

Ryerson, Ellen. Teacher training manual: Sexual exploitation of handicapped students. Seattle, WA: Seattle Rape Relief, 1983.

Who Cares. Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1979.

LOS ANGELES TASK FORCE ON FAMILY DIVERSITY
RESEARCH TEAM ON HOUSING ISSUES

Submitted by: Betty Hanna-Witherspoon, M.S.

July 7, 1987

Betty Hanna-Witherspoon is trained as an urban social planner. She has worked in the cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, East St. Louis, Carbondale, and Los Angeles. She has worked in rural Alabama as an advocate. Betty has worked at all levels of local and state government and in the private sector for more than twenty years. She operates her own consulting firm, the QPT Organization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Recommendations

Introduction

Fair Housing

Affordable Housing

Diversity

Conclusion

HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY'S FAIR HOUSING PROGRAM PUT SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON EDUCATING NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILIES ON THEIR HOUSING RIGHTS.
2. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY REVIEW ITS ABILITY TO IMPACT RENTAL POLICIES THAT CHARGE ADDITIONAL FEES FOR ADDITIONAL PERSONS ONCE A BASIC RENT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.
3. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY'S HOUSING PRODUCTION PROGRAMS GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES NEEDING FOUR AND FIVE BEDROOM UNITS.
4. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY INSTRUCT THE APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENTS TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF GENTRIFICATION AND DEVELOP PLANS TO MAINTAIN HOUSING FOR LOW-INCOME AND LARGE FAMILIES PRESENTLY LIVING IN THOSE AREAS.
5. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY REVIEW THE CITY'S PLANS AND STANDARDS TO DEVELOP FUTURE PLANS AND STANDARDS THAT INCORPORATE THE CULTURAL NORMS AND SOCIAL PATTERNS OF THE EMERGING POPULATION GROUPS.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago it could be said that " Some families just can't make it in the housing market. Thus the many housing assistance programs sponsored by federal, state, and local governments. Thus the continued concern over ways to provide those who are disadvantaged in the housing market with 'leverage'." Unfortunately, in 1987, twenty years later that statement still rings true. Some families still just cannot make it in the housing market and as our definition of family has expanded, we have had to pay attention to new ways in which families are not making it.

Over and over, Los Angeles is described as a world city. One conference on housing had as its theme, "Living in Diversity." The program welcomed delegates to "LA, world city, home of 2.1 million persons of Mexican descent, 200,000 Salvadorans, 175,000 Armenians, 200,000 Iranians, 175,000 Japanese, 150,000 Chinese, 150,000 Filipinos, 150,000 Koreans, 50,000 Vietnamese. Etc., etc., etc." With this kind of diversity comes new problems for families. Leo Estrada, then of the UCLA School of Architecture and Urban Planning, and chair of the national advisory committee on the 1990 census, has said that in southern California "the vocabulary hasn't really caught up with reality" and that we are close to a minority majority population." These people in his words are "socioeconomic minorities". The task force report on definitions of family and the changing make up of families highlights an additional overlay of change that is occurring amid this diversity.

The Los Angeles housing market is then a conundrum of problems for families:

1. New families, many non-English speaking, seek large housing units at affordable prices. They are often unavailable and substitute arrangements must be made.
2. Many areas that contain older, cheaper units are in the process of being redeveloped or gentrified.

3. There are growing numbers of families of all sizes that must shop the housing market with inadequate resources.
4. There are other families, who because of lifestyle choices or disabilities, experience discrimination in the housing market even when they have adequate resources.
5. Finally, there are those families that historically have experienced discrimination in the LA housing market and who continue to find vestiges of discrimination today.

Cushing N. Dolbeare, President of the National Low Income Housing Coalition has said, "Our major housing problems are caused by either low income, which makes decent housing unaffordable, or discrimination, which makes it unavailable, or both." The City of Los Angeles currently funds both a fair housing program and an affordable housing program. Both of these programs are administered by the city's community development department. They are both designed to protect those segments of the city's population that are least able to protect themselves from the vagaries of the marketplace. The fair housing program is required under regulations governing the city's receipt of Housing and Community Development Block Grant funds. The program is built on the legal requirements of federal, state, and local laws and enforcement mechanisms. The affordable housing programs have several sources of legal enablement; the most dynamic producer of housing is the city's mortgage bond financing program. Under both programs, families are provided protection. The question that this report sets for itself is simple: Can these two programs, which are funded by the city of Los Angeles, do more for the emerging kinds of family structures now populating the city. Other task force reports have defined the new population well:

1. Average family sizes are larger now than they were in 1970 or 1980. The "socioeconomic minorities" have higher birth rates than the remainder of the population. These two factors combine to create larger families among the new groups.
2. There are more one parent families, more single persons living alone, and more pair bonding than

was true in 1970.

3. There are more families that earn less than 50% of the county median income. More of these families live in overcrowded conditions in the central city and they pay a greater percentage of their income for housing.

FAIR HOUSING

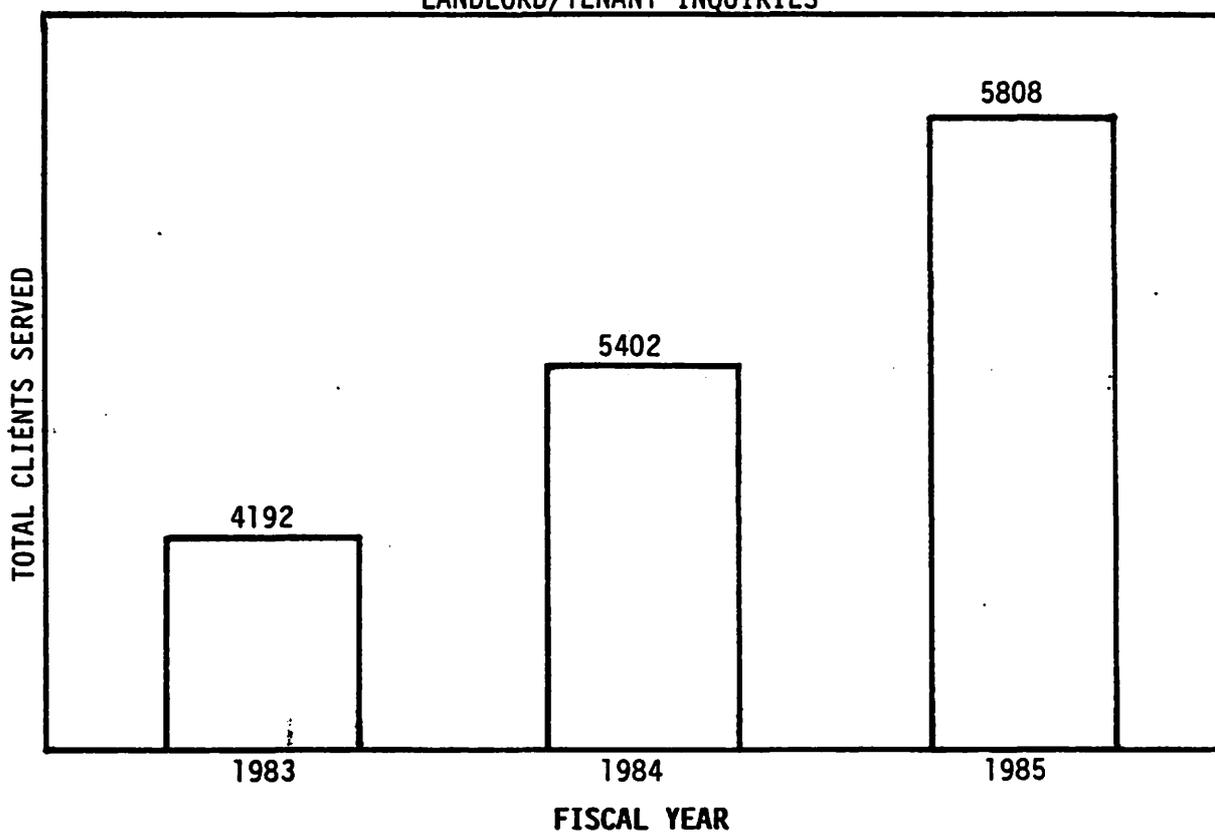
We must state with Thomas F. Honore, Director, Fair Housing Division, HUD Los Angeles Office, "The problems then of providing and acquiring adequate shelter are so complicated and intermingled with the general problems of finance, the economy,...that we should never seek to reduce the cause of all of our housing problems to one of discrimination and prejudice. Nonetheless, racial prejudices and biases apparently do serve as major complicating and worsening factors in this already complicated arena."

Usher Barnum, the student researcher on this project, contacted fair housing coordinators of the four fair housing councils serving the city. His conclusion, "Until recently, attention has been geared toward the nuclear family, but we've learned that we need to concentrate on extended families, on the single parent, and on single-mother families, especially in occupancy problems and affordable housing." There has been a steady increase in the percentage of complaints filed on the basis of fair housing laws. In just the San Fernando Valley the increase can be illustrated as detailed below:

<u>Category</u>	<u>% Change 85-86</u>
Race	34
National Origin	60
Marital Status	25
Child	40

The growth in the reported problems of the residents of the city of Los Angeles can be documented in the increased number of complaints as shown in the attached diagram. These problems occur even as the housing market is already demonstrably skewed. A quick plotting

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, GENERAL HOUSING AND
LANDLORD/TENANT INQUIRIES



of the ethnic characteristics of Los Angeles will show that there is a concentration of people of color in the south central and eastern portion of the city. Planner Joe Carreras has said, "The concentration of minority groups in the south central and eastern portion of Los Angeles County may be a matter of choice, but to the extent it is not, it poses a challenge...to assure that housing is available to all..."

Marital status complaints have increased over time, also. While it is prohibited for owners to discriminate against those who are unmarried, who choose to live together without marriage, and those who bond in pairs other than the traditional marriage, the application of rental requirements often circumvent this prohibition. For example, both persons may be required to be able to afford the apartment alone in a pair bond as opposed to having to justify that they can afford it as a couple if they are traditionally married.

A rapidly growing area of litigation has been the area of child discrimination. In Los Angeles County 39% of Black rental households and 54% of Hispanic rental households include a minor child. This contrasts with 24% of white rental households. A practice that affects families with children, therefore, has a disproportionate impact on minorities. One can generalize from this statement that the practice of charging additional dollars for each child added to the household impacts minority families disproportionately, also. The charging of these additional rents it should be pointed out is not illegal, but in a housing market where minorities have less dollars with which to shop, a disparate effect does occur.

In April of 1986, the Los Angeles County Department of Human Relations issued its report of its public hearing "Division in the Midst of Diversity: Continuing Discrimination in Housing". Among the Commission's findings is one that is particularly relevant to this area .

Commission Finding 10. Equal access to housing continues to be denied to many individuals for a variety of reasons, with discrimination having a pronounced and disparate effect on certain groups: Blacks, female-headed households, immigrants and refugees, the disabled, the economically disadvantaged, and families with children.

So while we acknowledge the city's fair housing program and its services provided through the fair housing councils, (Services may include providing information, literature, referrals, counseling, community education, investigating complaints , community education, and litigation. The city enters into contract with the Fair Housing Congress of Southern California for the provision of these services), we have the following recommendations:

1. Special emphasis be put on educating non-traditional families on their housing rights. Such families may include those who are single parents, extended families, very large families, the physically challenged, non-English speaking families and others.
2. The city review its ability to impact rental policies that charge for additional persons in a household once a basic rent is established for a dwelling unit.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Government concern with housing supply and conditions has been apparent since the nineteenth century. As early as 1892, a survey was made of slums in cities of 200,000 inhabitants or more. During World War I, Congress authorized government agencies to provide housing for war workers. Large scale federal and local action awaited, however, the depression of the thirties and in many ways developed functionally. Action was a response to extraordinary times. Actions have been reflective of the policy concerns of the times. We suggest that adequate provisions for adequate housing for the diverse family structures found in the city of Los Angeles be made a policy concern of these times.

It has already been shown that the city is experiencing larger

numbers of families with more than four persons present. It has also been shown that larger percentages of these families fall into socioeconomic minorities. It is clear then that a gap exists between what many of these families can reasonably afford to pay for housing and the housing available to them. If a family has no choice but to pay more than a normal (30%) percentage share of its income in order to obtain adequate--or, in many cases, any --housing, then the remainder of the family's budget is under a severe strain. Such families' needs are not being met by the marketplace.

There have, however, been areas of the city that have been more apt to provide housing for the large or low-income or large low-income family. These areas have in most instances been in the south central and eastern portion of the city. They have also been the areas with the greatest number of substandard dwelling units. Leo Estrada has said that there will be a "huge mass" looking for housing. They will be competing for the same housing. The result is a bidding up of the price of housing. Into this bidding war has come a new factor, the urban professional who loves the city and who can find the resources to renovate, redevelop, and renew areas such as the Adams-Normandie area, sections of Hollywood, sections of Silverlake and other areas that may be formally designated community redevelopment areas, but may not be so designated. This process of improvement by young middle-class residents is called gentrification. A term borrowed from the British. Daphne Spain argues that this phenomenon is not as widespread as painted in the media, but she does acknowledge that there is a side effect to gentrification and it is called displacement. The displaced tend to be the poor, the elderly, female-headed households, those with limited education, the unemployed, the disabled, and a high percentage of minorities in each of these categories.

The Los Angeles County Commission, mentioned previously, reported some findings that speak to this area:

Commission Finding 2. A majority of individuals in Los Angeles County will not be able to afford the purchase of a home by the end of the century.

Commission Finding 3. Affordable rental housing is declining at a significant rate.

Commission Finding 4. The need for rental housing of larger size will be great if we hope to accommodate the housing requirements of immigrant and refugee families, which generally include more children and relatives.

Commission Finding 8. The construction of low- and moderate-income, new, and replacement housing for both potential owners and renters lags far behind need.

Commission Finding 9. The problem of deteriorating and inadequate housing is prevalent in many racially and economically segregated communities.

We, therefore, recommend that:

1. The city's housing production programs give priority attention to the development of affordable housing for families needing four and five bedroom units.
2. The city instruct the appropriate departments to identify areas of gentrification and develop plans to maintain housing for low-income and large families presently living in those areas.

DIVERSITY

It should be of interest and concern that as the socioeconomic minorities emerge as power players in the city of Los Angeles present ideals of density patterns, definitions of neighborhood, and other indices of the city beautiful may well need redefining.

It is not clear that present concepts will be basic to the new aesthetic that is sure to emerge in the Los Angeles of the year 2000. Therefore, we recommend that the city's planning, community development, and building and safety departments review the city's plans and standards to develop future plans and standards that incorporate the cultural norms and social patterns of the emerging population groups. Such a review might look at square footage requirements, building types, density requirements, and community plans.

CONCLUSION

Initially, we asked ourselves a simple question; "Could the city use its fair housing and affordable housing programs/resources to do more for the emerging family patterns that its inhabitants enjoy?" The answer is also simple. The city can do more and the city must do more if we are all to enjoy the Los Angeles of the twenty-first century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, Division in the midst of diversity: continuing discrimination in housing.
LA, April 1986.
- Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, Fair Housing Survey.
LA, Spring 1985.
- United States Commission on Civil Rights, A sheltered crisis: the state of fair housing in the eighties. (Presentations at a consultation sponsored by the Commission, Washington, D.C., Sept. 26-27, 1983). See articles by Daphne Spain and George R. Genung, Jr. on gentrification.
- Witherspoon, Betty. A review of federal housing programs. Balto: Regional Planning Council.
- Witherspoon, Betty et al. Some Non-market housing considerations.
Balto: Regional Planning Council.

Periodicals

- Los Angeles Times, Fair housing in 1986-'A long way to go'. 6/25/86
- Fair Housing Council of the San Fernando Valley, The Connection.
August, 1985.
December, 1985
Dec/Jan 1986-87
April/May 1987

DIVISION IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY:
CONTINUING DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

**Report of a Public Hearing Sponsored by
the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations**

April 1986

**Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations
320 West Temple Street, Suite 1184
Los Angeles, California 90012**

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Peter F. Schabarum, Chairman
Kenneth Hahn
Edmund D. Edelman
Deane Dana
Michael D. Antonovich

First District
Second District
Third District
Fourth District
Fifth District

Commission on Human Relations

Albert DeBlanc, President
Ray Bartlett, Vice President
Morris Kight, Vice President
Patricia Russell, Vice President
Eleanor Montano, Secretary

Rev. Msgr. William J. Barry
Vito Cannella
Dr. P. J. Jones
Carole Keen
Stanley Larson

Augustine Munoz
John R. Phalen
James M. Riewer
Rabbi Martin Ryback
Catherine G. Stern

Eugene S. Mornell, Executive Director

Acknowledgments

The Commission is grateful to the staff who made this hearing possible. Frankie Maryland, Zara Taylor, and Jane Serlin who organized the hearing; Ms. Serlin also wrote the hearing report; Bunny Hatcher, Jay Harber, Mary Louise Longoria, Grace M. Löwenberg, Borden Olive, Keith Umemoto and Celia Zager, who provided support services; and Lionel Martinez who provided the overall supervision for the project.

I. Executive Summary

Introduction

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations has a long-standing commitment to supporting and promoting equal opportunity in housing for all of the County's residents. The Commission recognizes that discrimination in housing contributes to the isolation and polarization of the community and creates an atmosphere of tension and conflict which jeopardizes the public peace and common good.

In short, the Commission supports fair housing, not just because it is the law, but because there is simply no substitute for decent housing in open communities: The well-being of the County requires it.

The goal of achieving equal opportunity in housing for all of the County's residents and actively seeking solutions to housing discrimination is supported by the "Housing Goals and Policies" of the County of Los Angeles as stated in the Resolution Regarding Fair Housing, passed by the Board of Supervisors in November 1976.

The Resolution includes the following statement: "It is the policy of the County of Los Angeles to oppose discriminatory acts related to housing, including acts which have the effect of discrimination and affirmatively to promote equal opportunity in housing and community development programs County-wide, public or private, without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age or because of any arbitrary factor, such as socioeconomic status, marital, physical or mental handicap, and to extend housing choices and improvement of housing conditions on a non-segregated basis."

Nonetheless, the denial of housing rights to many individuals in the County remains an unfortunate reality in the 1980's. The four Los Angeles City Fair Housing Councils reported receiving 1,662 complaints of discrimination during 1984, and the Councils estimate that these complaints represent only 15 to 25 percent of the actual incidents of discrimination in the areas served.

The Commission recognized that the problem of continued denial of housing rights in the County warranted examination and discussion. Consequently, the Commission sponsored a public hearing on Housing Discrimination on June 27, 1985 in the Council Chambers of the Carson City Hall.

The hearing provided a day-long forum for testimony from experts in a variety of fields directly related to the provision of housing, as well as from individuals who had personally experienced discrimination while seeking housing. The principal goal of the hearing was to focus attention on the problem and thereby stimulate creative remedies to housing discrimination in light of the changing demography of the County.

Testimony at the hearing focused on three principal subject areas:

planning for Los Angeles County's housing tomorrow;

concerns of fair housing advocates; and

special areas of housing discrimination.

This report is a digest of 27 presentations by individuals representing a wide range of organizations and concerns who are listed in the Appendix of this report. The complete text, or audio tape recordings, of all testimony is on file at the Commission office and is available to the public.

The views expressed at the hearing obviously were those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect those of the Commission. The Commission, however, believes that perceptions are often as important as factual data and has taken this into account in developing its own findings and recommendations.

Commission Findings

1. Los Angeles County is becoming the first major metropolitan area in the United States to be a truly multiethnic, multiracial society. The fastest growing segments are the Latino and Asian-Pacific populations, which could easily surpass 50 percent by the 1990's.
2. A majority of individuals in Los Angeles County will not be able to afford the purchase of a home by the end of the century. ✓
3. Affordable rental housing is declining at a significant rate. ✓
4. The need for rental housing of larger size will be great if we hope to accommodate the housing requirements of immigrant and refugee families, which generally include more children and relatives. ✓
5. Neighborhoods segregated by race and socio-economic status were created by a mix of decisions of the private sector regarding real estate development, governmental policies, and open harassment and discrimination.
6. Racial housing patterns are potentially affected by all policies and trends that affect household location decisions, such as the location of schools and sources of employment.
7. Competition for the limited resource of housing can exacerbate intergroup stress and conflict.
8. The construction of low- and moderate-income, new, and replacement housing for both potential owners and renters lags far behind need. ✓
9. The problem of deteriorating and inadequate housing is prevalent in many racially and economically segregated communities. ✓
10. Equal access to housing continues to be denied to many individuals for a variety of reasons, with discrimination having a pronounced and disparate effect on certain groups: Blacks, female-headed households, immigrants and refugees, the disabled, the economically disadvantaged, and families with children. ✓
11. A limited political and financial priority is often put on fair housing efforts despite the fact that racial segregation is one of the County's most persistent social problems.
12. Housing discrimination is practiced by members of a variety of ethnic and racial groups.

Commission Actions

The Human Relations Commission has undertaken a number of activities in response to concerns about equal access to housing.

1. The Human Relations Commission conducted a fair housing survey of cities in Los Angeles County that provide fair housing services. The survey, completed in Spring 1985, revealed that 46 cities, in addition to all unincorporated areas, have contracted with the County for more uniform services. This represents an overall increase in such services, which include educational outreach, and in some cities, investigation and conciliation. For the first time, cities with populations under 50,000 have a fair housing service.
2. Human relation staff is providing extensive consultant services to fair housing groups in such areas as multi-ethnic program outreach, housing practices area audits, checking procedures and volunteer recruitment.
3. Human Relations staff serves on the General Plan Policy Review Board for the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning and has submitted recommendations regarding human relations issues and modifications of the Housing Element.
4. Human Relations staff refers numerous potential complainants, who regularly call the Commission, to the appropriate fair housing council or the California State Department of Fair Employment and Housing for services.

Commission Recommendations

1. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors should direct the Department of Public Works to develop a modification of the building and safety code so as to encourage and stimulate construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing that will accommodate the homeless and the larger families of the County's population.
2. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors should direct the Department of Regional Planning and the Community Development Commission to investigate the increased use of publicly owned land to generate low- and moderate-income housing.
3. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors should direct the Community Development Commission to increase the resources allocated to the Fair Housing Councils, and allow the Councils to use County funds for the essential work of fair housing checking.
4. The California State Department of Fair Employment and Housing should explore means by which its housing discrimination enforcement policies can be strengthened, such as higher punitive damages, shorter response periods of respondents, and greater use of full-time housing specialists.

II. Testimony

Planning for Los Angeles County's Tomorrow

The changing demography and rapid growth of Los Angeles County provided the focal point for the testimony of Dennis Macheski and Joe Carreras of the Southern California Association of Governments.

Dennis Macheski summarized the important population trends in the County through the end of the decade by citing the decline of the non-Hispanic White population, a County-wide move toward more ethnic balance (with all groups becoming minorities), and a very rapid expansion occurring in both the Asian and Latino communities. Population growth, in general, was seen as continuing in the County with approximately one million additional people settling in the area by the year 2000.

Mr. Macheski saw these changes in demography as presenting the greatest challenges to the Los Angeles Unified School District, local government finances, social programs, and intergroup relations. However, he stressed that the opportunities provided by this growth would also be great, because those coming to the County would provide enormous cultural diversity and a work force with energy, enthusiasm, and an entrepreneurial attitude.

In contrast to the influx of immigrants to the County, Mr. Macheski noted that in the decade between 1970 and 1980, one million non-Hispanic Whites had left Los Angeles County for the outlying Counties of Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego.

Joe Carreras explained the housing implications of the changing ethnic mix of people living in Los Angeles County. Since the immigration scenarios of the Southern California Association of Governments suggest a rapid growth for Latinos and Asians, and since both groups have a tendency for larger households, housing units in the future will have to be larger in size. However, this need for larger units will run counter to the current trend to downsize units to make housing more affordable. ✓

Mr. Carreras focused on some serious implications for groups with larger households unless housing costs are held down. He projected that the incidence of Asian and especially Latino families living in overcrowded conditions or overpaying for housing can be expected to rise. He also believed that racial/economic separation is a very serious problem in Los Angeles and is likely to remain so. ✓

Clinton F. Rosemond, also from the Southern California Association of Governments, addressed the issue of the elimination of illegal discrimination in housing by using the model provided by his agency's Regional Housing Allocation Plan. This plan provides for low- and moderate-income housing growth, especially in areas where additional development is taking place.

Mr. Rosemond asserted that the Regional Housing Allocation Plan can serve as a guide for local housing elements, which, if adhered to, would provide adequate and reasonably priced housing opportunities throughout the Southern

California region. He further believed that this plan remedies some glaring deficiencies in the current Statewide approach to planning, which does not ensure that all jurisdictions make a maximum effort to achieve adequate housing for all income levels.

Mr. Rosemond suggested that since there is a strong connection between low income status and minority households, increased housing opportunities for low income households would significantly increase housing opportunities for all groups. This holds true particularly in the renters' housing market where increasing the number of units would make landlords more eager to rent on a non-discriminatory basis.

Mr. Rosemond also summarized two famous and influential New Jersey State Supreme Court cases, Mount Laurel I and II. These judicial decisions provided an example of court condemnation of zoning that excludes the provision of low- and moderate-income housing within a specific community. In its decision, the New Jersey State Supreme Court reasoned that zoning must be directed to satisfy not only the local general welfare but the regional general welfare as well. Mr. Rosemond strongly supported this notion of local municipalities accepting their fair share of a region's lower income housing needs.

The specific housing needs of Los Angeles County were assessed in the testimony presented by Lynnise Brookins Wright of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. Ms. Wright stated that the most pressing housing need of the future population of the County will be a far greater supply of affordable housing units. The average price for an existing detached single-family home nearly tripled between 1973 and 1984, with average housing prices in the County considerably higher than those nationwide.

Ms. Wright explained the program that the County has developed to attain the goal of decent housing in a suitable living environment for all. By implementing the General Plan, the County has sought a more compact environment with less urban sprawl and has encouraged and expedited the development of low-income housing.

Ms. Wright noted that housing opportunities are limited by income, job location, special needs, and discrimination, and these problems affect many segments of the population.

The testimony of Art Walker, Fair Housing Manager of the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, also addressed the County's effort to develop decent and affordable housing. In 1981, the Board of Supervisors created the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, consolidating into one agency all of the County's housing programs, including development, planning, housing, finance, production, and conservation. Mr. Walker explained how this relatively new agency has initiated the construction of over 6,000 new dwelling units, financed through a tax-exempt mortgage revenue bond program whose focus is first-time home buyers and low income tenants.

Mr. Walker also discussed the Commission's Rehabilitation and Marketing Program (RAMP) which buys and/or rehabilitates housing units and then sells them to eligible, low income buyers. Thus far 300 units have been completed. Additionally, his Commission offers a wide variety of low and no interest loans available for persons with very low income.

Programs like RAMP that support low cost housing and provide creative solutions to housing shortages were strongly recommended by Ralph Lewis of Lewis Homes.

Joe Carreras' Recommendations:

1. Communities need to plan for growth and permit a variety of housing types that can serve people of different income levels.
2. Communities need to study existing zoning and building regulations to determine if unnecessary regulations are adding to costs.
3. Communities need to establish or support fair housing programs.
4. Elected officials need to make public expressions in support of fair housing.
5. Lenders need to establish affirmative lending practices and support community reinvestment.
6. Realtors need to actively support equal housing laws and programs.
7. Property owners and apartment managers need to offer vacant units on a non-discriminatory basis.
8. Fair housing councils need to advocate and monitor the implementation of equal housing opportunity initiatives.
9. The Federal and State governments need to make available the resources to carry on the fight against discrimination.
10. Everyone needs to support improved race relations and support open housing.

Lynnise Brookins Wright's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should endorse and become actively involved, where possible, in efforts to:

Locate low- and moderate-income housing near employment opportunities, reasonably assessable to public transportation or alternative transportation means.

Encourage dispersal of low-income housing in order to prevent the concentration of low-income persons in a single community.

Facilitate the relocation and rehabilitation, or replacement, of substandard low- and moderate-income housing units.

Promote the inclusion of units for low- and moderate-income families in new housing developments.

Promote design and construction of rental housing to accommodate large families.

Support efforts to eliminate redlining through an affirmative marketing program and affirmative lending practices by all financial institutions.

Promote development of housing for the elderly and handicapped.

Support the establishment of shelter facilities for the homeless in a diversity of County locations.

Promote and implement programs to broaden housing choices for low- and moderate-income households through counseling and educational services.

2. The Human Relations Commission should become involved in a coordinated education effort to:

Encourage community based organizations to develop literature and materials explaining the history and culture of Los Angeles' minority communities;

Assist in identifying funding sources for these efforts;

Utilize the television, radio, and print media along with public libraries and schools to disseminate this information throughout the County; and

Encourage community leaders to sponsor "getting to know you" sessions involving homeowners associations and neighborhood groups from different communities to discuss cultural differences and mutual concerns.

Ralph Lewis' Recommendations

1. The Human Relations Commission should investigate the ways in which builders are discouraged from producing low-income housing, i.e., cities demanding larger than usual lot sizes and certain jurisdictions' use of arbitrary requirements for square footage.
2. County government needs to strengthen its support for and provision of low-cost housing.

Fair Housing Advocates

Tom Honore, Fair Housing Director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), described the effects of housing discrimination as fundamentally damaging to the fabric of society. He mentioned a recent HUD study which demonstrated the continued prevalence of the denial of housing rights, with over two million cases of racial discrimination in housing occurring in the United States last year. The HUD study also showed that minorities have a 48 percent chance of less favorable treatment if they are buying and a 72 percent chance of less favorable treatment when they are seeking rental housing. However, according to Mr. Honore, HUD receives less than 5,000 complaints a year regarding housing discrimination. He attributed this relatively small number of complaints to the Federal statute's weak and lengthy enforcement and remedial mechanisms.

Mr. Honore expressed his belief that the people of Los Angeles County have the opportunity to demonstrate positive interracial harmony on a scale that would provide a model for the world. However, he expressed his uncertainty that we have even begun to move constructively in this direction.

Carol Schiller of the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) reported the relatively small numbers of housing complaints that are received Statewide, with approximately 700 cases reported annually. Her perception was that since most of the cases (85 percent) involve discrimination in rental of housing, there are few "big buck" settlements and therefore no harsh examples to keep others from breaking the law or real incentive for those discriminated against to seek redress. Additionally, many cases are settled voluntarily or dropped. A current lack of fair housing testing also makes it impossible to realistically assess existing discrimination. However, she did mention that new areas of housing discrimination seemed to be emerging with some foreign-born landlords refusing to rent to a variety of racial and ethnic groups, and discrimination against children the most frequently reported complaint in the rental housing market.

Mary N. Lee, Attorney for the Greater Watts Justice Center, observed that lack of vigilance in fighting housing discrimination can have a devastating effect on society and creates the notion that it is okay to discriminate. She asserted that existing methods of ensuring that fair housing is implemented are increasingly under attack. Even the idea that housing discrimination is still a problem must continually be publicized by fair housing advocates. Further, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain enforcement at all levels, which creates a lack of credibility with the public.

Mary M. Lee described the pressure that the Los Angeles Fair Housing Councils must constantly confront:

competition for inadequate funding;

a current workload that includes investigation, conciliation, coordinating enforcement, community education, and fund raising; and

emerging problems such as racial violence, needs of immigrants, discrimination against low-income people, vandalism, and violence.

Anthony Mischel, representing the Westside Fair Housing Council, described the average complaint caseload that his Council encounters. On the average, 20 cases are opened each month with 1/3 involving race, 1/5 involving child discrimination, and 1/3 involving issues of national origin. The types of grievances that they receive are exorbitant rental application fees, steering, or deceptive rental practices.

Hosea White of the California Association of Realtors, Mary Ellen Hughes of the Apartment Association of the San Fernando Valley, Jake Wager of the Southern California Housing Roundtable, and Tony Kriss of the Carson, Torrance, Lomita Board of Realtors all focused on education and cooperation as essential tools for fair housing. These individuals represented organizations that seek to eradicate the discrimination that historically has been an integral part of the housing industry in Los Angeles County.

Tony Kriss and Hosea White concentrated on the importance of gaining the cooperation of professional real estate associations, especially for the purpose of encouraging affirmative marketing. The basic objective of affirmative marketing should be to assure that all persons have an equal chance of being informed about housing availability.

Mary Ellen Hughes stressed the importance of ongoing education in providing equal opportunity for renters. Through the Apartment Association, Ms. Hughes informs apartment owners about their responsibilities under existing anti-discrimination policies and laws, and seeks equitable solutions to a variety of problems in the rental housing market.

Jake Wager explained how the Southern California Housing Roundtable provides a unique opportunity for cooperation because of the diverse affiliations of its members. The Housing Roundtable's members are from agencies, organizations, and industries that have traditionally not communicated effectively: realtors, apartment owners, mediation boards, municipalities, legal services, and fair housing councils.

Thus far, Mr. Wager testified, the Roundtable has conducted a fair housing survey, presented workshops, and provided a forum for a range of views and solutions.

Thomas Honore's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should seek ways and means to strengthen the Federal and State fair housing laws.
2. The Human Relations Commission should seek ways to incorporate curriculum on housing discrimination in local school systems.
3. The Human Relations Commission should seek ways and means to support fair housing activities.

Carol Schiller's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should encourage the Board of Supervisors to let fair housing testing be part of the County funded fair housing program and seek to remove all barriers from testing.
2. The County should sponsor a survey to gather data on the status of fair housing in the region.
3. The Human Relations Commission should support the removal of existing ceilings on punitive damages in all housing cases.
4. The County should require standardized record-keeping by landlords.
5. The County should require that all resident apartment managers be on the premises and be State certified.
6. The Human Relations Commission should renew and strengthen its commitment to fair housing.

Mary Lee's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission needs to keep the issue of housing discrimination an active priority in order to underscore the concern of government and keep the public aware.
2. The Human Relations Commission should emphasize the continued need for fair housing funding.
3. The Human Relations Commission should encourage private attorneys to volunteer their time for fair housing issues.
4. The Human Relations Commission should vigilantly support fair housing legislation.
5. The Human Relations Commission should stimulate the strict enforcement of existing fair housing laws.

Anthony Mischel's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should assist in developing a system wherein a single agency has jurisdiction in housing discrimination cases and can provide strong enforcement and rapid expediting.
2. The Human Relations Commission should support checking/testing as these procedures currently are under attack.
3. The Fair Housing Councils need more money and an expanded use of funds from the County.

Mary Ellen Hughes Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should develop a compact brochure or stuffer (in various languages) which explains housing laws and could be mailed out with all tax bills and deeds.
2. The Human Relations Commission should sponsor, in conjunction with local museums, a variety of ethnic cultural events and displays in order to increase multicultural awareness.

Jake Wager's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission needs to increase its efforts in the area of providing fair housing.
2. The Human Relations Commission should encourage voluntary compliance with housing laws.
3. The Human Relations Commission should support any legislative remedies that encourage fair housing.
4. The Human Relations Commission should forcefully reject "English only" laws.

Special Areas of Housing Discrimination

The Psychological Effects of Housing Discrimination

Ken Kelly and Betty Witherspoon of the San Fernando Valley Fair Housing Council, Marcella Brown, Hollywood-Wilshire Fair Housing Council, and Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, journalist and sociologist, articulated strong concern over the insidious and lasting psychological effects of discrimination and prejudice, especially when reinforced by the media.

Betty Witherspoon expressed her view that the psychological burdens of years of oppression on Blacks has caused them to be reluctant and lack forcefulness in demanding housing rights and relocating to predominantly White areas. She felt that this phenomenon is currently being exacerbated by the emphasis on resolving complaints through conciliation, which is generally perceived as an ineffectual remedy by non-Whites.

Ken Kelly expressed his belief that there needs to be a change in the cultural "mind-set." He blamed the entertainment media for providing negative and inferior images of Blacks and fostering the notion that housing integration is not normal or desirable.

Housing for the Homeless

Andy Raubeson, Executive Director of the Single Room Occupancy Corporation, concentrated on strategies to tackle the problems of substandard low-cost housing in downtown Los Angeles. The Corporation, which was created last

year by the Los Angeles City Community Redevelopment Agency, works to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for those individuals at the bottom ring of the housing market (many of whom are financially forced to spend some of their time living on the streets).

Mr. Raubeson described how his firm makes structural, electrical, and fire safety improvements, while refurbishing individual apartment/hotel units and improving overall security. The Single Room Occupancy Corporation then manages the building it has rehabilitated to ensure that it does not deteriorate, and holds down rents so that it still provides an option to the poorest of residents on a non-discriminatory basis. Even on this level of the housing market, Mr. Raubeson has witnessed race and ethnic discrimination.

Mr. Raubeson testified that the units that are renovated would be lost without rehabilitation, and that they often provide the only alternative to the streets for many in Los Angeles.

Economic Discrimination and Redlining

Herman Thomas, Jr., Executive Director of the Metro-Harbor Fair Housing Council, addressed the issue of economic discrimination, which he defined as denying housing by using a person's income source or income status as justification. According to Mr. Thomas, differences in the treatment of homeseekers that are not totally explained by buying power have concentrated the rich and poor into disparate neighborhoods and prevented access to decent housing for many individuals. Mr. Thomas stated that the groups most frequently affected are senior citizens, women with children, and Blacks.

Mr. Thomas used examples from his cases to show that economic discrimination, as a continued form of financial redlining, is widely used and practiced. The solution to this kind of discrimination, he asserted, was society learning to apply established standards equally to all people regardless of race, social or economic backgrounds.

Another form of financial redlining was discussed by Melanie Lomax, attorney and first Vice-President of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She discussed a study that the NAACP has undertaken to determine the equity of financial lending practices of banks and savings and loans. During a six-month period, the investigation uncovered strong indications that dual loan practices exist for Blacks and Whites seeking residential and home improvements loans. The financial institutions seemed unwilling to take reasonable risks with Black loan seekers, putting them at a distinct disadvantage in the home buying market.

Ms. Lomax also mentioned that the sources of housing discrimination against Blacks appeared to be changing. She gave displacement and discrimination against Blacks by Asians as an example of this.

Testimony from Housing Discrimination Survivors

The personal stories of survivors of housing discrimination articulately described a full range of discriminatory practices, from receiving less

courteous treatment, less information, or few choices, to acts of open hostility and violence. Although the discrimination varies, the effect is the same--deprivation of basic housing rights and human dignity.

Mr. B. J. Park concluded from his encounter with discrimination that the system is stacked against the victim, since it ultimately failed both him and his family. Mr. Park described himself as an immigrant from Korea who believed in the promise of the American dream when he bought a home in Malibu in 1981. However, soon after the purchase, Mr. Park and his family were subjected to threats and harassment by a neighbor. He was told, "You don't belong here you God damn Oriental." The verbal threats soon deteriorated into physical violence with the neighbor pulling a gun and holding it to Mr. Park's head. Fearing for his own life and the safety of his family, Mr. Park left the property and has not yet returned to live there.

Following this incident, Mr. Park informed the Sheriff's Department, the American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP, the Mayor's office, and two of the County Supervisors' offices about the attack. No one seemed able to help him. (The Westside Fair Housing Council did eventually give him some assistance.) The overall impression that Mr. Park was left with was that there were no effective remedies for him and there is a very real need for more punitive measures for those who engage in discrimination.

The failure of the legal system to offer protection was a theme that was reiterated by Stephen Wolfson who faced eviction when his wife gave birth to their first child. Mr. Wolfson's family was forced to leave their Marina apartment when the owners refused to renew the lease after the birth of their son. Mr. Wolfson spoke of his years of litigation as a burden that he had to carry and pay for without any outside assistance. He testified that he has still not been compensated for his legal costs despite his ground-breaking victory in the area of rental housing discrimination against children. The Wolfson case set a legal precedent in the State that has since been incorporated into housing law.

Geneva Fernandez of the Southern California Coalition on Battered Women described her personal experiences of housing discrimination as a Latina lesbian. Ms. Fernandez told how a couple of years ago, when she was employed at the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, she went apartment hunting in Hollywood. Time and time again apartment managers refused to rent to her. She felt she was denied housing solely because of her sexual orientation.

Ms. Fernandez stated that she has also been made aware of the problems that battered women have in seeking housing. She has seen battered women and their children denied housing that they desperately needed. The reasons that landlords and managers give for turning them down are that their last place of residence was a shelter, their husbands may show up, or that they are a poor financial risk.

Alan Nakashima of the Hollywood-Wilshire Fair Housing Council expressed concern over the lack of awareness that he feels the gay and lesbian

community has of fair housing services in the general community. He also stated that a need exists for gay and lesbian checkers to investigate complaints of housing discrimination.

Alton McClure of the Westside Center for Independent Living spoke about specific instances of housing discrimination against people with disabilities. He listed the perceptions/myths that form the basis of this discrimination as:

the disabled need sympathy and pity;

the disabled should not determine for themselves how and where they live;

the disabled are fragile, sick, and don't live long; or

the disabled are often mentally retarded.

In addition, he testified that the income source of disabled persons is used as a rationale to deny them housing. And although the disabled are eligible for 10 percent of subsidized housing, this allocation of housing is often taken by senior citizens. Even the homeless missions that provide a last source of shelter for many refuse housing to persons with physical impairments.

Finally, Mr. McClure testified that, in his experience, physical disability discrimination is not generally addressed by the Fair Housing Councils. This is despite the fact that 50 percent of his clients complain of discrimination caused by inaccessibility. Ironically, Mr. McClure noted that 50 percent of all people will experience some form of disability at some time in their life.

Marcella Brown's Recommendation:

The Human Relations Commission needs to contact the media and encourage them to cover fair housing stories on a regular basis.

Melanie Lomax' Recommendation:

The Human Relations Commission should put pressure on lending institutions to institute fair practices on behalf of minority loan seekers.

Stephen Wolfson's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should work to make legal remedies more effective, more punitive for those who discriminate and more supportive of those who are victimized.
2. The Human Relations Commission should work to establish a curriculum in the public schools that teaches the history of the fair housing movement and the need for open housing for all.

Geneva Fernandez's Recommendations:

1. The Human Relations Commission should work to make sexual orientation a protected class in all housing law.
2. The Human Relations Commission should recommend to all appropriate County departments that they coordinate services with battered women's shelters, since battered women are forced to leave home in a hurry and should not be put on waiting lists.

Appendix

Hearing Presenters

Sylvia Muise, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Carson

Anthony Mischel, Board of Directors, Westside Fair Housing and
Professor of Law, National Lawyer's Guild

Dennis Macheski, Program Manager
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Joe Carreras, Regional Housing Planner
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Tom Honore, Fair Housing Director

Housing Urban Development

Attorney
ice Center

Director

Housing

Clint Rosemond, Regional Housing Planner
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Jake Wager, Housing Manager
City of Downey

Lynnise Brookins Wright, Special Assistant to the Director
Los Angeles County Regional Planning Department

Betty Witherspoon, Urban Social Planner
San Fernando Valley Fair Housing Council

Andy Raubeson, Executive Director
Single Room Occupancy Housing Corporation

Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, Former Real Estate Editor
Los Angeles Times

Marcella Brown, Program Specialist
Hollywood-Wilshire Fair Housing Council

Alton McClure, Housing Specialist
Westside Center for Independence

Alan Nakash