

TO: LLOYD

Spectrum watched
several years with the
county unions to achieve
this result. Low

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1995 ★

County Extends Health Benefits to Employees' Domestic Partners

Meeting behind closed doors and without any public discussion, a divided **Los Angeles County** Board of Supervisors agreed Tuesday to extend health insurance benefits to domestic partners of county employees.

The 4-1 decision made in executive session and announced afterward will allow gay, lesbian and unmarried heterosexual partners of full-time county employees the same health insurance options as married partners.

The employee and the county will each pay part of the cost. The county's share is projected at \$600,000 to \$800,000 in its first full year depending on the number of unmarried employees who use the health benefits for their partners.

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky made the motion to direct county officials to initiate all steps necessary to offer health coverage to domestic partners.

The city of Los Angeles has had such a policy for several years and some major employers, including the Walt Disney Co., have announced similar programs.

But Board Chairman Mike Antonovich said through a spokesman that it is wrong to extend benefits to gay or unmarried heterosexual partners of county employees when that coverage will cost the financially troubled county up to \$800,000 a year.

January 3, 1991

Edmund D. Edelman,
Supervisor, Third District
821 Hall of Administration
500 West Temple
Los Angeles CA 90012

Dear Supervisor Edelman:

For many years, we have looked to you as a consistent supporter of equal rights for lesbians and gay men. In the past, you have been consistently responsive to our requests, and we hope that you will respond similarly on this occasion.

One of the most important issues currently facing the lesbian and gay community involves domestic partner benefits. As you know, lesbian and gay couples do not have the option of legal marriage, which is a requisite for many employee benefits, such as health and dental insurance and bereavement leave. This has created the grossly inequitable situation where a lesbian or gay employee (or unmarried heterosexual employee) cannot obtain health insurance benefits for his/her life partner, as can a married employee. In response to this situation, a national movement for domestic partner benefits has emerged and numerous municipalities have granted some form of benefits to domestic partners.

In Los Angeles County, a Coalition for Domestic Partner Benefits has recently been formed at the initiative of several Los Angeles County unions. This Coalition has a goal of achieving domestic partner benefits for employees of Los Angeles County. Insofar as Los Angeles County is the largest employer in the County, such a victory would have significant positive implications for all other workers in Los Angeles County.

As a way to pursue this strategy, the Coalition has asked you to convene a Task Force on Family Diversity to gather data regarding the diverse families of Los Angeles County employees and make recommendations in the area of employee benefits and other working conditions. We believe that the formation of such a task force under your auspices would be the best available mechanism to pursue domestic partner benefits for Los Angeles County employees.

Edmund D. Edelman
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January 3, 1991

A similar task force convened by City Councilman Mike Woo has proven to be productive in Los Angeles City. In addition to gathering relevant data, such a task force would be an organizing vehicle for our community in relation to this issue.

We are confident that you will agree to sponsor this task force and look forward to working with you around this issue in the future.

Sincerely,

Phil Ansell

Phil Ansell
SEIU, Local 535

Morris Kight

Morris Kight
Los Angeles County
Human Relations Commission

Tom Coleman

Tom Coleman
Family Diversity Project

Virginia Uribe

Virginia Uribe
Friends of Project 10

John Wyrrough

John Wyrrough
AFSCME Council 36

J. Hatfield

The Center-Long Beach

Adele Starr

Adele Starr
Parents and Friends of
Lesbians and Gays

Mary Newcombe

Mary Newcombe
Lambda Legal Defense

Sue Matranga-Watson

Sue Matranga-Watson
Long Beach Lambda Democratic Club

Teresa De Crescenzo

Teresa De Crescenzo
Gay and Lesbian Adolescent
Social Services

Jim Green

Jim Green
SEIU, Local 660

Penny Hawkins

Penny Hawkins
Southern California
Women for Understanding

Torie Osborn

Torie Osborn
Gay and Lesbian
Community Services Center

COALITION FOR DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS


SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

6:30 P.M.

1. *Introductions*
2. *Purpose of Meeting*
3. *Review of Domestic Partner Benefits in Other Public Entities*
4. *Goals*
5. *Strategy*
6. *Next Meeting*

660 VOICE

Vol. 63, No. 8

LOCAL 660 — SEIU  472-M

September, 1990

Gay and Lesbian Employees Demand Equal Benefits

by Voice staff

Gay and lesbian employees of Los Angeles County are demanding the same insurance and bereavement benefits for their partners as traditionally provided to married heterosexuals.

"We want the *same* rights as everyone else," said Local 660 Boardmember Jim Green. "Gays and lesbians have the same needs as other County employees. When their partner is sick, they're faced with outrageous bills their medical insurance

won't cover."

Laguna Beach, West Hollywood, Santa Cruz, Berkeley, San Francisco, Seattle, New York and other cities and counties have recently extended benefits to all employees' mates, regardless of sexual orientation. Those agreements share several common points. All the entities define "domestic partner" and require that some form of affidavit be filed identifying the mate.

Green said the fight for domestic partner benefits in Los Angeles County is be-

ing spearheaded by a Gay and Lesbian Caucus formed last year by SEIU Local 535 members. In May, delegates to the SEIU Western Region Civil and Human Rights Conference adopted a resolution to fight for homosexuals' rights on and off the job.

The *Gay and Lesbian Caucus plans to hold a strategy meeting at 6:30 p.m., Sept. 13, at Local 535 headquarters, 548 S. Spring St., Suite 630. For more information, contact Jim Green at (818) 500-3316.*