

perception is based on prejudiced assumptions. Like those who are heterosexual, lesbians and gay men come from a diverse array of families: two-parent nuclear-style families, stepfamilies, single-parent households, foster families, etc. In addition, the Commission heard testimony that many more lesbians and gay men are parents than is often thought.¹⁴ Finally, lesbians and gay men also form domestic partnerships, primary adult family commitments which they intend to last a lifetime.

Therefore, the city created its policy of nondiscrimination in employment based on sexual orientation.¹⁵ This policy assures that, like heterosexuals, homosexual employees within the city will be able to meet their family obligations, pay their bills, provide food, clothing and shelter to their loved ones, and make their contributions to the community.

One prominent leader in the gay community testified that there are exemptions within the ordinance which permit employment discrimination in some instances.¹⁶ The reasoning behind the exemptions is unclear, and inconsistent with other ordinances. For example, the ordinance exempts nonprofit corporations from the definition of a "business establishment."¹⁷ This exception is included in a section which properly exempts religious organizations from the definition. It is not clear why purely secular nonprofit organizations should be excepted from a valid city regulation prohibiting employment discrimination. Such organizations are included in regulations governing AIDS antidiscrimination within the city,¹⁸ and their exclusion from Chapter 5.09.010 seems arbitrary.

Similarly, Chapter 5.09.020 exempts businesses with less than five employees from the provisions of the regulation. Again, the chapter prohibiting discrimination based on AIDS applies equally to all businesses, and it is not clear why discrimination based on sexual orientation should be treated differently.

The city's policy of nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation comes within the public policy to support families. Employment protection allows family members to earn a living, regardless of the family member's sexual orientation. This is a broad and important public policy, and exemptions are appropriate only in the most extreme circumstances, and with the most carefully articulated rationales.

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13. The Commission recommends that the City Council amend the city's regulations regarding employment discrimination based on sexual orientation to make them stronger. Chapter 5.09.010 (A)(3)(a) should be amended to exempt only "Any religious association." Chapter 5.09.020 (A) should also be amended, striking the language, "which employs a minimum of five employees."

3. Disability and Families of Persons With Disabilities

Long Beach has made a commitment to addressing the needs of people with disabilities in a way that attempts to minimize, to the extent possible, the disruptions their disabilities might cause to ordinary life functions. To that end the City Council created the Citizens Advisory Commission on the Handicapped (CACH), with jurisdiction to advise the council on policy matters related to disabilities. The Human Relations Commission is sensitive to this jurisdictional issue. Nevertheless, there are distinct family issues that are unique to people with disabilities. These issues merit discussion here.

Unlike most other groups discussed in this report, virtually everyone is a potential member of the disabled community. This Commission heard testimony from several people who became disabled after accidents.¹⁹ This is very different from those whose minority status stems from race, ethnic origin, sex, or sexual orientation, who have time to become aware of their condition and its consequences in a world full of institutions that have

incorporated bias against people of that condition into their structure. The unanticipated entry into the community of persons with disabilities presents unique challenges to the person who becomes disabled. Particularly relevant in the context of this report, their family members are also directly affected by the disability in a profound way. The chief functions of a family involve support--emotional, physical and economic. A suddenly disabled family member dramatically alters the family's support structure in ways the family could not have anticipated.

This was illustrated by testimony from Sue Caves, assistant director of the Long Beach AIDS Network. She pointed out, from her own personal experience, that AIDS (which has been classified as a disability entitled to protection within the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) not only affects the person who becomes infected with the virus, but also that person's entire network of friends and, most especially, family.²⁰ Family members who fulfill their obligations of support and care must often quit their jobs to provide the extraordinary care required by the infected family member. While some who are infected with HIV may be covered by health insurance, many are not. This places a severe burden on the financial resources of the family, as well as the toll the disability takes on the family's emotions. As noted above, when families choose not to care for their infected family members, society must step in to fill the gap. It is therefore important that families be given as much societal support and reinforcement in their caregiving as possible.

AIDS is only one dramatic example of the effects of a disability on families. To some extent, disability can be expected to affect the structure of all families with a disabled member. The particular conditions of each kind of disability require families to develop new sensitivities, and new ways of relating. While there is a great emphasis at agencies like the Disabled Resource Center on encouraging persons with disabilities to become

independent, persons with disabilities, like everyone, often depend on their family relationships for support. Policies must be sensitive to how disability affects all aspects of family life, as well as respecting the ability of persons with disabilities to function independently.

There is currently much discussion among persons with disabilities to replace CACH with a new Commission on the Disabled.²¹ It is argued that CACH is often without sufficient authority to function effectively. This Commission shares the concerns expressed in this testimony. Enforcement of the new federal Americans with Disabilities Act will be a major task, and the city will be required to take primary responsibility for overseeing its local implementation and enforcement. In light of this, the limited powers of CACH appear to be insufficient to meet this new challenge.

14. The Commission recommends that the city council examine whether the existing Citizens Commission on the Handicapped has a sufficient mandate to assure that people with disabilities have full participation in the community life of Long Beach; that the city conduct a comprehensive survey of the facilities that serve the public to assure compliance with all existing federal and state laws that relate to accessibility; and that the city explore the designation of an ombudsperson within the city government to work as a liaison between the city and people with disabilities.

15. This Commission recommends that the City Council examine all city policies and programs dealing with persons with disabilities to determine how those policies and programs affect, not only the disabled person, but also their families. Policies should encourage and facilitate family members, broadly defined, who provide assistance and care to the disabled family member. Specific programs should include:

- Respite care
- Public education providing accurate information about disabilities
- Support groups for family members
- Resource and referral services

C. The City as Lobbyist and Member of Associations

In addition to its ability to further policy goals legislatively, the city acts as a lobbyist, and as a member of various associations. For example, Long Beach is a member of the League of California Cities. In such a capacity, the city can work with other government bodies to address conflicting governmental policy choices at various levels that affect Long Beach residents.

The city maintains a lobbyist in Sacramento, and one in Washington, D.C.. These lobbyists and association representatives report to the City Manager's Office.

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16. The Commission recommends to the City Manager's Office provide the city's designated lobbyists and association representatives with the city's policy on families, in order to effectively guide the city's voting representatives in making critical policy decisions. A policy statement should be prepared to inform the lobbyists and association members about the reasoning underlying that policy.
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NOTES

1. Municipal Code Chapter 2.44.020.
2. Resolution No. C-24468, Dec. 29, 1987.
3. Planning a Family Policy for California: First Year Report of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, p. 17.
4. Assembly Office of Research, quoted in "Taking the Initiative on Child Care," L.A. Times, October 21, 1990.
5. Id.
6. Environmental Scan, 1990: Technical Report, published by the United Way, p. 2-3.
7. Id.
8. Senior Citizens Advisory Commission Annual Report 1989-90.
9. Environmental Scan 1990: Technical Report, p. 1-10-11.
10. Planning a Family Policy for California: First Year Report of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, p. 42.
11. Telephone conversation with Catherine Ryan, October 9, 1990.
12. "A Natural Step: Stride-Rite's Pioneer Day-care Program Brings Kids and Seniors Together," L.A. Times, March 26, 1990.
13. Telephone conversation with Catherine Ryan, October 9, 1990.
14. Testimony of Susan Matranga-Watson, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 35-37).
15. Municipal Code, Ch. 5.09.020 covers general employment discrimination. Article XI of the City Charter assures city employees will be treated fairly and impartially. Article I of the City Rules and Regulations lists specific classifications protected by Article XI, including sexual orientation.
16. Testimony of Jack Newby, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 16).
17. Long Beach Municipal Code, Ch. 5.09.010 (A)(3).
18. Long Beach Municipal Code, Ch. 8.94.010 (C).

19. Testimony of Dianne Piastro on June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 3); Testimony of Harley Rubenstein on June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 34); testimony of Marilyn Williams on June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 37).

20. Testimony of Sue Caves, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 17).

21. Testimony of Dianne Piastro, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 4); testimony of Harley Rubenstein, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 35).

V. The City as Employer and Contractor

The city carries out its policies in another role, that of employer, either directly, through its employee policies, or indirectly, through the requirements it places on the many employers who contract with the city for various goods and services. In addition, the city is a model employer that private companies may look to. By its actions, the city as an employer demonstrates to others how they can participate as corporate citizens in helping to achieve public policy goals that affect the entire community.

A. The City as Employer

The City of Long Beach currently employs about 5,205 people. 37.7% belong to ethnic minorities, 34.2% are female, 65% are married with dependents, 27% are single with dependents, 8% are single without dependents (at least as the term "dependents" is presently defined by the Human Resources and Affirmative Action Department).¹ The city has a stated policy to

"provide equal employment opportunity to all persons on all matters affecting City employment. The City of Long Beach is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment practices, and reaffirms its commitment that no person shall benefit or be discriminated against in any manner inconsistent with federal or state statutes, the City Charter, ordinances, resolutions, rules or regulations."²

In Article I of the Rules and Regulations for carrying out the provisions of the City Charter, the city explicitly enumerates this policy with regard to its own employees:

"[N]o person employed by or applying for employment with the City shall be hired, promoted, demoted, dismissed or in any way favored or discriminated against for any reason, including but not limited to: age, sex, race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, sexual orientation, or political affiliation except where such factor is a bona fide occupational qualification or where the law compels or provides for such action."

Some employment benefits directly affect family choices, and favor certain family forms over others. Benefits alone may make up nearly 40% of an employee's entire compensation.³ Because of the number of employees affected by these decisions, because of the potential size of benefits, because of the city's explicit and forceful policy of nondiscrimination, and because of the effect the city's actions in this area may have on policies private employers may be considering, it is important to examine specific benefits and working conditions to see how they measure up to the city's policy of nondiscrimination.

City employees are represented by a number of unions, with the exception of certain management-level employees and elected officials. While the policy issues discussed in the section are the same for for all workers, whether represented by unions or not, the union bargaining process takes place under state law, and places an additional burden of responsibility on the unions. Unions are subject to a duty of fair representation, which means that they are required to represent all members fairly. Employees who, as a group, are receiving compensation or benefits inferior to those of the majority have a claim against their union for representing them unfairly.

There was testimony that the definition of "family" is continually subject to negotiation, and has broadened over the years.⁴ One MOU, for example, defines "family" to include an employee's

father, step-father, father-in-law, mother, step-mother, mother-in-law, brother, sister, wife, husband, child, step-child, former legal guardian, grandfather or grandmother, grandchild, or foster child.⁵

There will be situations in which an employee's relationship with people who fit into these categories will deserve this recognition. But is there a rationale for excluding family forms such as domestic partners from this list? As discussed above, a domestic partner is, by definition, a person's primary life partner. If that partner becomes ill or dies, the employee will, without any question, be directly and deeply affected. But because that relationship does not show up on the list of family categories, the employee is viewed as having no important relationship to her or his partner at all.

This excludes lesbian and gay union members as a class, since they cannot fit their relationship, no matter how committed or permanent, into any listed category, for example by marrying. As a result, lesbian and gay union members may be receiving a significant percentage less in compensation than their heterosexual counterparts. The president of one influential union testified that authenticated domestic partnerships should properly be included within the definition of "family," and that it was the City which had resisted union efforts to include this term.⁶

The city's needs are best met when its employees are treated fairly and without discrimination. Conflicts such as those between a union and its members can create discontent among employees. Part of the conflict that has arisen in this area is due to the city's lack of a clear policy on families.

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17. The Commission recommends to the City Council, in light of the policy proposed in this report, that provisions in union contracts dealing with employee benefits include authenticated domestic partnerships within their definition of "family."
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Regardless of union affiliation or non-affiliation, though, the terms and conditions of a city worker's employment are matters of city policy, determined by the Civil Service Department.

The Director of Human Resources and Affirmative Action testified that no comprehensive workforce survey had been conducted in recent years to determine what the current family needs of workers are. Such a survey is an important first step in determining the way current family policies are affecting employees.

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18. The Commission recommends that the City Council conduct a thorough and sensitive survey of the workforce, to accurately determine the family needs of workers. This survey should be designed to include information regarding all of the family forms discussed in this report, including stepfamilies, domestic partnerships, single parent households, three-generation households, and foster families.
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1. Care of Dependents

Employee benefits designed to assist dependent, non-employed family members emerged as an important part of employment contracts during the years following World War II.⁷ In those years, the dominant image of the family was that of the working father, homemaker mother and minor children,⁸ an image constantly reinforced through its portrayal in the television programs which were becoming increasingly popular.

A very different model preceded this one, based on labor performed at or near the home, primarily agriculture and craftwork.⁹ For such families, there was no family member necessarily absent from the household for large portions of the day. Work and family were merged. This model still exists in, for

example, the family farm, though even there it is constantly being replaced by large corporate farming interests.

The parent who was required to be absent from the post-war "nuclear family" was given compensation and benefits designed to support the dependent spouse and children, so that at least one parent would always be available to care for the household and children. In this sense, the economic aspect of the family functions was assigned to the employed spouse, and the emotional aspects were the primary responsibility of the non-employed spouse.

This division of the family functions presents problems for families today. For a number of reasons, it is increasingly difficult for a single earner to support an entire family. Thus, there has been a dramatic increase in two-earner families, and a corresponding need to provide care for their children. This need for childcare is even stronger for single parents.

But children are not the only dependents families must care for. The "nuclear family" model assumed that older family members would be living on their own, and seemed to exclude them from the picture. But medical science has made miraculous advances in the last few decades, and the life span has increased dramatically. For California, the population growth rate for those 55 and older will be over 100%. The population over age 85 is expected to increase at a rate of 119%.¹⁰

Thus, it is clear that in coming years more of these seniors will be of concern to their own children and grandchildren. More and more children will take responsibility for their aging parents, who will become their children's dependents. Thus, workers today will be caring for families which may consist of three or more generations. This is much more like the family many ethnic and racial groups are accustomed to, than it is like the "nuclear family."

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19. The Commission recommends that the City Council explore ways to expand existing benefits to include "dependent care," which would include childcare, elder care, intergenerational care and care of other family dependents. These findings should be reported to the City Council by January, 1992. Programs developed by the city's Childcare Coordinator and the Superintendent of Senior Services could serve as valuable models.
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2. Sick Leave

Permanent, full-time employees get 24 hours per year, plus a maximum of 8 hours of accrued vacation time, for "doctor/dental appointments or for the care of an employee's ill or injured child or member of the immediate family living in the household."¹¹ This is a valuable benefit for two reasons. First, it demonstrates that the city values its employees seeing their doctors and dentists, so that developing problems can be attended to at an early stage, thus avoiding long-term absences by the employee later.

But a family policy is also at work here. This benefit permits the employee to take time to attend to an ill family member, recognizing the responsibility family members have toward one another. It is unclear, though, who constitutes a "member of the immediate family living in the household." The term is left undefined. Supervisors may not be certain if time off is permitted for an employee's stepchild or domestic partner. Employees may thus be encouraged to lie about their reasons for taking time off.

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20. The Commission recommends that the Sick Leave Policy be clarified to include an appropriate definition of "family" that does not discriminate on the basis of an employee's family structure.
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3. Death or Illness in Family

Permanent full-time employees get up to 24 hours of paid leave not charged to accrued vacation or sick leave for the death or critical illness of an employee's family member. Again, this benefit supports a family policy: a family member's death or critical illness adds a tremendous deal of stress to an employee's life. Productivity is almost certain to decline during this period. The city thus recognizes the family's need to be together to support one another during the crisis.

For these reasons, "family" is very broadly defined for purposes of this benefit.¹² Nevertheless, the definition does not include domestic partners. Excluding this, or any family form in this context works against the reasons behind offering the benefit. It was partially for this reason that "family" was so broadly defined here. An employee's life will be disrupted equally, whether or not the family member comes within the definition offered by the benefit. If an employee's domestic partner becomes ill or dies, it will be irrelevant to the employee that that relationship is not on the broad list.

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21. The Commission recommends that the definition of "family," for purposes of an employee taking leave time to attend to matters concerning a family member's death or critical illness, be amended to include domestic partners, as that term has been defined in this report.¹³
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4. Insurance

Permanent full-time employees receive health, dental and life insurance benefits, which the city contributes to generously. This is among the largest benefits offered by the city, in terms of dollar contributions. "Dependents" are also eligible for this important coverage. An employee's children will qualify, as will the employee's legally defined spouse. This definition of "dependent" has been in existence for at least nineteen years, and

perhaps more.¹⁴ This benefit protects the primary family relationships as they occur in the "nuclear family" model.

That model, though, excludes one primary adult family form, domestic partners. Whether the partners are unmarried stepparents, a same-sex couple with or without children, or a Catholic couple whose religion would prohibit their marriage because of one partner's prior divorce, their status as a family should be recognized in this area. Caring for the health needs of immediate family members is among the most important of all family obligations. Injury or illness to a person's primary life partner will be devastating, and that devastation is only increased if the injured or ill partner has no medical insurance. Excluding this one primary family relationship, while recognizing only the marital contract, works against the policy for extending an employee's health insurance to the employee's dependents.

However, because there is real potential for abuse here, strict documentation must be required. Therefore, the benefit should only be offered to those couples who sign an affidavit of domestic partnership. A copy of that affidavit would then be kept in the employee's confidential personnel file.

The Director of Human Resources and Affirmative Action testified that no one has formally proposed expanding the definition of dependent to include domestic partners.¹⁵

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22. The Commission recommends that the City Council examine its healthcare benefits package in light of the city's policy of nondiscrimination based on age, disability, or sexual orientation, as well as the state's policy against marital status discrimination, and consider including legally defined domestic partners within the definition of "dependents." The Department should make its report to the City Council by the end of November, 1991.
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5. Pregnancy Leave

The city allows pregnant employees to use their disability leave in order to deliver and care for the newborn.¹⁶ The city maintains no other policy relating to parental leave, except a policy, entirely within the discretion of managers, to permit fathers to take paternity leave, if they can be spared from their department.¹⁷

The city can design a parental leave benefit that is not confined to pregnancy. The present policy recognizes only one kind of parenthood--motherhood. A broader policy of parental leave recognizes that being a parent is more than just a biological function or a medical condition, it is a responsibility of supreme importance that parents share equally, regardless of gender. While it would be unworkable for the city to, in effect, pay employees to be parents, a short period of unpaid parental leave during an infant's critical first months, available to parents regardless of gender, is one way the city can acknowledge that being a parent is profoundly important to all of us.

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23. The Commission recommends that the City Council implement a policy that recognizes the importance of both fathers and mothers in the childrearing process. A more realistic policy would permit both fathers and mothers to take an unpaid leave of absence during and for a short time after the birth or adoption of a child. This policy should be consistently applied to all city employees.
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6. Flexibility--Working Hours and Benefits

The post-war model of employment adopted the 40-hour, 5-day work week. There was a certain orderliness and sense of fairness to both employees and employers that was attractive. It incorporated two days off each week, and nearly always included regular paid vacations during the year. This model is still widely used.

But it does not come without problems, which have become apparent. When the vast majority of a city's workforce arrive and depart at the same hours, traffic congestion during those hours of the day, with its frustration and tremendous waste of fuel, is a certainty. As noted above, this model assumes that one parent will be working in the marketplace, and the other will be home caring for children, an assumption that has little support in current family employment patterns.

Employers have developed a variety of creative alternatives to address these broader social needs, which present no more administrative difficulty than other plans, and are much more successful in dealing with the needs of employees' families. A few of these plans were outlined by the Legislature's Joint Select Task Force:¹⁸

- Compressed work weeks, such as the four-day week;
- Flextime, a program which allows flexible starting and quitting times;
- Flexiplace/Telecommuting programs, which take advantage of computer technology, as well as other arrangements, so that employees may spend some time working in locations other than a centrally-located office;
- Regular Part-Time, with some regular benefit rights;
- Job sharing, where two people share one position, with pro-rated salary and benefits;

Similarly, benefit packages were generally designed with uniformity in mind. But such uniform packages, while easy to administer, are at odds with the variety of family relationships. Because of this, employers have been adopting benefits programs that incorporate more flexibility.

Flexible scheduling and benefits programs allow employees to better integrate work and family. Any employee programs that accommodate this difficult balancing act will provide incalculable social benefits in the future.

24. The Commission commends the city's policy of flexible working hours and recommends to the City Council that it be promoted among employees and expanded to include, where feasible, other flexible scheduling.

25. The Commission recommends that the City Council continue its exploration of flexible benefits plans and ultimately adopt a flexible plan that more accurately reflects the needs of city employees.

B. The City as Contractor

The city also has the ability to assure that the city's many contractors comply with Long Beach's policies regarding families. Contractors must include the following clause in their contracts with the city:

The contractor and subcontractor agree that they will not discriminate against any person in the performance of the contract and will comply with applicable Federal, State and City of Long Beach Equal Opportunity Laws, rules and Regulations.¹⁹

This, though, only requires the bare minimum that contractors comply with the law. The city can go beyond this, and encourage contractors to provide family-supportive employee policies, such as those discussed in this report. Contractors who have established policies such as dependent care, flexible benefits, recognition of domestic partnerships, parental leave time, etc., should be given preference in the award of contracts.

This should only follow when the city, itself, establishes such policies. The city could declare itself a model employer by instituting family-supportive policies for its own employees, and

use its influence to stimulate similar policies in city contractors.

26. The Commission recommends that the City of Long Beach become a model employer, with a clear policy to recognize and support the family relationships of its employees. The city should develop and abide by written guidelines on family supportive policies.

27. The Commission recommends that the city provide incentives and/or preferences to city contractors who establish family-supportive policies that meet the guidelines to be created by the city to govern its own employment policies.

NOTES

1. Testimony of Bill Storey, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 49).
2. Affirmative Action Plan, 1988-91, p. 1 (Supplement, p. 98).
3. "Benefits for Live-in Mates of Workers Face Obstacles," The Wall Street Journal, July 25, 1989; "Partners in Love, But Not in Law," The Philadelphia Inquirer, July 30, 1989.
4. Testimony of Bill Storey, July 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 51).
5. Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Long Beach and the Long Beach City Employees Service Lodge 777, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO (effective July 1, 1989 to June 30, 1992), p. 22 (Supplement, p. 85). This definition is effective for purposes of granting leave time for a death or illness in the immediate family.
6. Testimony of Tom Plell, July 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 55).
7. Planning a Family Policy for California: First Year Report of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, p. 15.
8. Id.
9. Id.
10. Environmental Scan 1990: Technical Report, p. 1-10-11.
11. 1989-90 City of Long Beach Fringe Benefits Summary for Permanent Full-time Miscellaneous Employees, Section III (B). (Supplement, p. 72).
12. Id., Section IV (A). (Supplement, p. 73).
13. The partners sign a form, under penalty of perjury, swearing that:
 - (1) they currently reside in the same household, and have been doing so for the previous 12 months;
 - (2) they share the common necessities of life;
 - (3) they have a mutual obligation of support, and are each other's sole domestic partner;
 - (4) they are both over 18 years of age and are competent to contract;

- (5) neither partner is married;
- (6) neither partner is related by blood to the other;
- (7) they agree to notify the Department of Human Resources and Affirmative Action within 30 days if any of the above facts changes.

This affidavit would be kept in the employee's confidential personnel file. It should include a brief notice emphasizing that it will be the employee's responsibility to notify the Department promptly in case there are any changes, as well as a notification that the affidavit may impose legal responsibilities between the partners.

14. Testimony of Bill Storey, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 51).
15. Id. (Supplement, p. 50).
16. Testimony of Bill Storey, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 50).
17. Id.
18. Planning a Family Policy for California: First Year Report of the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, p. 21. See also "Working 7 to 5--Four Days a Week," L.A. Times, November 30, 1989 (Supplement, pp. 83-84).
19. Long Beach Municipal Code, Ch. 2.72.040.

VI. The City as Service Provider

One of the city's most important functions is as a service provider. Long Beach provides services in some of the most critical areas of community life: education, transportation, recreation, housing, health, and public safety. The city's family policy will affect the way services are provided in each of these areas.

A. Education

1. Schools

Education of our children is probably the most important service any city provides. A commitment to education is a commitment to the future.

Education and assistance from the city's schools were among the most common recommendations in the testimony heard during this study.¹ Because of the importance of education, and recognizing the school district's autonomy, as well as its complexity, the Commission feels that this issue is best addressed by the district directly, in its own study.

28. The Commission recommends that the City Council transmit to the Long Beach Unified School District the suggestion that the district convene its own task force on family diversity. The task force should:

- Review this report;
- Examine the district's own Family Life Education Curriculum, considering the recommendations made in the report of the State Task Force on the Changing Family;
- Take into account the various family forms, including stepfamilies,

single-parent families, domestic partnerships, families headed by lesbian or gay parents, families which include many generations, non-English speaking families, foster families and families with disabled members;

- Analyze the district's employment and benefit policies for fairness, flexibility and equitable treatment of all family structures;
 - Propose ways the district can cooperate with the city's Childcare Coordinator on issues of mutual concern;
 - Address the issues regarding child abuse reporting and enforcement.
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Recently, a task force reported to the Board of Trustees of the Long Beach Unified School District, recommending that the district institute Project 10, a program to deal with lesbian and gay youth.² According to the task force's report, figures show that over 45% of gay males and 20% of lesbians have been the victims of verbal and physical assaults in our nation's secondary schools. In addition, one 1987 study showed that 48% of gay identified teenagers had run away from home, and 28% had dropped out of school because of conflicts about their sexual orientation.³

There is no doubt that lesbian and gay youth experience discrimination, rejection and violence to an extraordinary degree. Misinformation about homosexuality is pervasive, and too often extends into the family, itself. The task force figures on runaways, particularly, demonstrate the effects such misinformation can have.

While the school district cannot, by itself, solve the wider social problem of misinformation, the district can attend to the

more immediate needs of the more than 6,000 students in the Long Beach schools who are lesbian or gay.⁴ Project 10 has proved its value in both the Los Angeles and Alhambra School Districts over the last six years.

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29. The Commission recommends that the City Council transmit to the Long Beach Unified School District the suggestion that the district adopt the recommendations made by the Project 10 Long Beach Task Force, and establish a Project 10 program in the Long Beach School District.
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2. Libraries

In most people's minds, education means childhood education, and that means the schools. But we live in an information age, where new technologies and new discoveries in virtually all fields occur rapidly and continually. Keeping up with relevant changes is a necessary part of our adult lives.

In addition, as one of California's largest cities, Long Beach provides an extensive array of programs and services. But finding out what services are available can be a frustrating and time-consuming process.

The strategic plan laid out in Long Beach 2000 recommended using the city's extensive system of libraries, located in neighborhoods throughout the region, as centralized information centers.⁵ This "24-Hour City Hall" project will utilize sophisticated computer networks to keep current and accurate information about both public and private programs available to Long Beach citizens.⁶ The project is still being implemented.

Use of library facilities in this way is a great advance toward making needed information available as widely and easily as possible. But the libraries, themselves, sometimes present significant barriers. One serious problem pointed out to the

commission is that some libraries may not be fully accessible to people with disabilities.⁷ A library that is only partially accessible can still present nearly insurmountable inconvenience to disabled users. For example, some libraries have bathrooms that are inaccessible to persons with disabilities.⁸ Such a condition can make use of the library an embarrassing experience for persons with disabilities, a situation that has no parallel for the able-bodied. This is easily remedied, and should be.

30. The Commission recommends that the City of Long Beach's library-based 24-Hour City Hall project be promoted widely in all neighborhoods when it is fully implemented, and that information regarding the project be available in all languages frequently spoken in each neighborhood. Special care should be taken to assure that non-English speaking populations can understand and access the system, and outreach programs should be designed for populations which do not ordinarily visit the libraries.

31. The Commission recommends that each city library be inspected immediately for full accessibility to persons with disabilities and that any inaccessibility problems be remedied promptly.

B. Transportation

Long Beach is a large city geographically, and is part of the much larger Southern California area. Transportation here is a critical concern. Because jobs are spread over this large region, commuting may take a great deal of time out of a worker's day.

Those on fixed incomes and their families may be disproportionately affected by public transportation. This is particularly true for persons with disabilities. Long Beach Transit has been especially sensitive to the disabled community, with several programs in place.⁹ Nearly 100% of the fleet vehicles are equipped with lifts, and the Dial-A-Lift service, in

existence since 1976, provides curb-to-curb transportation for those unable to use the regular fixed routes. This service, though, requires pre-registration, a procedure that may be overly burdensome in some cases, such as emergencies, or for newly-arrived residents.¹⁰

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32. The Commission recommends that Long Beach Transit look into the possibility of providing emergency Dial-A-Lift service for those who have not preregistered but must utilize the service on a one-time basis.
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C. Recreation

Recreation is another broad area in which the city provides services that affect families. Organized sports, and the facilities to house them, parks and beaches, and transportation to and from recreational activities are all among the services Long Beach provides.

It is important to distinguish recreational activities and programs from childcare programs. Childcare is a highly supervised process, placing strict responsibility on the childcare provider, with the provider subject to an involved licensing process. Recreation programs, such as the afterschool program run by the Department of Parks and Recreation for latchkey children, are less formalized. They provide adult supervision, but not the kind of care supplied in childcare programs.

The Commission heard testimony about the importance of organized recreational programs as an alternative to gang membership. Particularly in the summer months, when school is not in session, athletic activities can be a healthy outlet for the energies of children from poor households that might otherwise find its expression in gang membership.¹¹ A child's need to belong to a group can be as effectively satisfied by membership in a youth

choir, or on a softball team as by membership in a gang. This is especially true in households where there may be no parent at home during the day to supervise older children.

This analysis applies across all racial lines. Long Beach now has youth gangs in the African-American, Latino and Asian communities.¹² Because gangs exist as a world apart, with highly developed and symbolic codes that are not usually understood by outsiders, parents may often be ignorant that their children have joined gangs, or may only learn this fact after it is too late.¹³ This is an excellent example of an area where a strong public policy can help to solve a problem parents are not able to cope with. Recreational programs such as organized sports, academic competitions, theatrical and musical presentations, day trips, or library and museum educational series can all provide healthy alternatives to gang activities. Perhaps more important, these are also alternatives to the destruction, intolerance of outsiders, territoriality and violence which serve as the primary "values" that predominate in gangs.

Gangs may be especially attractive to children who feel unloved at home.¹⁴ Thus, families in which the parents are struggling just to make ends meet, such as single-parent families, and families where parents work at two or more low-paying jobs, are especially vulnerable. It is here that the city's recreation program can demonstrate its value. While a community recreation program will not be a substitute for strong family bonds, it can be a place where the child can feel she or he belongs; a place for children to interact cooperatively with others toward a common goal, so that they can bolster their own self-esteem and sense of worth in positive ways.¹⁵

Because of the destruction that gangs cause, not only to property, but to the concepts underlying civilized society,

programs that can provide alternatives to gang life should be among the city's highest priorities.

33. The Commission recommends that the City Council examine its youth recreation programs, particularly those offered in the summer, in light of the fact that they may be primary alternatives to gangs. The priority given to those programs should be increased accordingly.

34. The Commission recommends that the City Council seek ways to further expand youth programs through cooperative efforts with local organizations. In addition to athletic programs, the Department of Parks and Recreation should examine programs that would cooperate with local area theatres, orchestras, choruses, museums, libraries and colleges, in order to emphasize the value of cooperative endeavors besides sports.

The Commission also heard testimony from a community activist who has spent a great deal of time counseling gang members and their families.¹⁶ He has observed that many gang members are dissatisfied with gang life, and are seeking alternatives. Unfortunately, young people who join gangs are not often able to find the programs that will help them. It is therefore important for the programs to find the kids. Outreach programs are especially vital in this area.

35. The Commission recommends that the City Council make outreach funds available for existing and future programs that provide alternatives to gang life, including recreation programs, counseling, and family education.

Another group that feels an intensified effect from public recreation programs is the disabled. The city provides some adaptive recreation programs,¹⁷ but these programs may require fees

that keep them out of the reach of those who are on extremely limited incomes.¹⁸

36. The Commission recommends that the City Council consider ways for the Department of Parks and Recreation to waive or reduce fees for adaptive recreation programs whenever possible. Private funding should be considered as a way to replace participation or entrance fees.

37. The Commission recommends that the City Council assure that the Department of Parks and Recreation has fully accessible vehicles available for scheduled recreational events whenever accessible vehicles are necessary.

D. Housing

Housing is becoming a virtual crisis in California. There can be no doubt that this is one of the primary issues facing families. Statewide, 16.8% of family income goes for housing alone, and in some major urban areas like San Francisco, average families may spend up to 24.6% of their income for a place to live.¹⁹ In 1988, California home prices were nearly double those of the nation as a whole.²⁰

The Commission heard testimony about the dimensions of this problem in Long Beach from numerous witnesses. Three major areas were of concern: affordability, homelessness, and discrimination.

1. Affordability

While housing costs in Long Beach tend to be lower than those of Los Angeles County as a whole, Long Beach 2000 found that only about 10% of Long Beach residents in 1983 were able to earn adequate income to afford the then-average home price of \$115,000.²¹ Perhaps as a result of this, the city's Planning

Department estimates that 61% of Long Beach residents rent their housing, while only 39% own their own home.

But this raises the question of how renters can ever afford to buy their own home. As noted by the Legislature's Joint Select Task Force, in its update on Housing, only the most affluent renters can afford to both pay monthly rent and set aside enough money for a downpayment on a home.²² Renters may find themselves stuck in a Catch-22: unable to accumulate the capital to purchase housing which is, itself, a capital asset, the most substantial asset the majority of Americans can expect to own. As the Task Force notes:

Of all the striking statistics on the effect of the housing crisis, perhaps none is as startling as the difference in wealth between renters and owners. Households that own had a median net wealth of \$82,010 in 1988, while that of renters was a mere \$4,885.²³

Approximately one out of every four households in the city spends more than 30% of its income on housing.²⁴ And while the city has aggressively pursued and received all available state and federal housing funds, only about 20% of needy households receive such assistance.²⁵

The city has taken some steps to address this need. In 1988, the city council authorized the Second Mortgage Assistance Program. First-time homebuyers whose income is below the city median may apply for a second mortgage of public funds to fill the gap between the housing price and the family's ability to pay. Principal and interest payments are not due until the home is sold.

The funds from the initial allocation are nearly used up, and the newly-operational Long Beach Housing Development Company must now evaluate the program, and decide how to proceed. There have been administrative difficulties with the program, though, such as the lack of commitment by some program participants to keep up

payments on their first mortgages, and the unwillingness of some lenders to make loans to parties who, in many cases, have poor credit histories. Nevertheless, the program is too important to abandon entirely, and the creativity that went into envisioning the program should be utilized to solve its problems.

The city has come up with other solutions to problems which relate to affordability. In 1990 the city expanded its one-to-one replacement protection to units throughout the city. This assured that low-cost housing units which were torn down would be replaced by the same number of comparably affordable units. The program previously applied only to the coastal region. As of the writing of this report, this policy is under review by the city.

Low-cost housing is especially important to the elderly who are on fixed incomes. The city found that twenty-four percent of new low-income households over the next five years will be elderly. The Housing Element of the General Plan, adopted in June of 1989, establishes this group as a priority.

Programs like these, in particular, are excellent examples of the city responding directly and effectively to meet a challenge. Nevertheless, there are other possibilities that should be considered.

For example, the Legislature's Joint Select Task Force's recent update on Housing contains two recommendations for addressing family housing needs that merit attention. The city could offer incentives to developers who include accessory units, or "in-law apartments" to new housing.²⁶ Such accommodations would be important to families with elderly parents on limited incomes. This style of housing respects the need of seniors and their adult children for independence and privacy, while also recognizing the necessity for family connectedness in emergency situations. It also could help to address one of the "hidden"

problems when dependent elders move into the same home with younger generations: elder abuse.²⁷ While statistics on this crime are difficult to come by, it is not a small problem; one estimate is that millions of elderly people may be victims of abuse.²⁸ One part of the problem may be the conflicts that naturally arise when an additional, and sometimes highly dependent person moves into the household.

The advantages of accessory units could be valuable in other family situations, too, including (as the name suggests) in-laws, older, but still-dependent children, married children without the means to purchase a home of their own, and a variety of others.

Another recommendation from the Task Force is increased support for and public awareness of shared housing opportunities.²⁹ This is another suggestion that could be particularly valuable to independent-minded seniors who cannot afford to live by themselves, but do not want to be dependent on their children.

38. The Commission recommends that the City Council examine incentives for builders to include accessory units in new single-family homes.

39. The Commission recommends that the City Council study the attitude of seniors toward shared housing opportunities and, if warranted, use the resources of the Senior Service Center to create a network for those wishing to share housing.

40. The Commission recommends that the City Council reallocate funds for the Second Mortgage Assistance Program.

41. The Commission recommends that the City Council maintain the existing housing stock for affordable to low and very low income earning families in Long Beach. The Commission supports the continuation of the one-to-one replacement ordinance as a disincentive to the demolition of the affordable

housing available to low and very low income earning persons.

2. Homelessness

There are some human needs that even the most well-designed housing assistance programs cannot meet. Some people are not able or willing to take advantage of Housing Authority programs, for various reasons. Extreme poverty may cause people to drop out of the system entirely. In the most drastic cases, these people are wholly unable to provide themselves with housing, and they become homeless. It is unclear exactly how many people are homeless in Long Beach. One witness testified that the number would probably be higher than the 3-5,000 estimate made in 1987.³⁰ The family shelter run in Long Beach by one group alone, Catholic Charities, served 794 homeless people in 1989.³¹ Of these, 311 were children, and 187 were families.³²

The problem of homelessness is complicated. In addition to housing affordability, issues of dire poverty, emotional illness, drug abuse and abandonment are also involved. While a number of groups and individuals have been reaching out to help the homeless, both city and county funding designed to address homelessness have been cut back.³³

One witness testified that many homeless shelters segregate those they shelter by gender, keeping men in one area, and women and children in another.³⁴ While this may be appropriate in some cases, the approach taken by the program run by Catholic Charities must also be considered. The philosophy at Catholic Charities is to keep families together. This allows families to rely, in part, on their own internal support structure during this stressful period. Breaking families apart when they are in temporary shelter interferes with that important sense of connectedness.

The homeless are among the most vulnerable members of our community. As their numbers grow, so should our common commitment to help them. In addition to affordable housing, the city should provide the mental health counseling some segments of the homeless need, job assistance programs, and as much support as possible for the many private shelters that provide refuge and compassion.

42. The Commission recommends that the City Council continue to work with private agencies to develop a more coordinated program of homeless assistance. This program should include both physical and mental health services, job assistance, and counseling, and temporary shelter.

43. The Commission recommends to the City Council that, whenever possible, temporary shelters for the homeless keep families together, a policy used successfully by Catholic Charities, rather than imposing sex-segregation as an absolute rule.

3. Discrimination

The city has a clear policy of nondiscrimination in housing, based on factors such as race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability or handicap, marital status, Vietnam-era service or AIDS or HIV-antibody status. In order to carry out this policy, the Housing Authority has adopted a broad and inclusive definition of "family" for the administration of federal, state and local housing programs within the city. According to this definition, a family is:

"two or more persons sharing residency, whose income and resources are available to meet the household's needs."³⁵

Nevertheless, the Commission heard testimony that families are discriminated against in Long Beach. The Acting Director of the Long Beach Fair Housing Foundation testified that discrimination

against families with children continues to be a common complaint.³⁶ This is especially true for families that have more than two children.³⁷ By this means, landlords can intrude into one of the most personal aspects of a family's life, the decision regarding family size. The city's policy is to see that all families have equal access to housing, without regard to their internal structure, and that must include the entirely private decision about how many children should be in the family.

Discrimination based on race is still the most commonly reported violation.³⁸ This is an issue that directly impacts families, since single mothers of minority races are the most likely to be turned away from housing.³⁹ But racial discrimination is not confined to discrimination against minority races. The Acting Director also noted that there is evidence that some Asian landlords may be discriminating against non-Asians.⁴⁰ This may be because those Asian landlords are not fully aware of the laws prohibiting racial discrimination in housing. Because of the importance of the housing laws, she noted that outreach into the Asian community is important, so that Asians can safeguard their own right not to be discriminated against, as well as to insure that Asian landlords can avoid lawsuits for violation of the housing rights of others.

The Fair Housing Foundation also anticipates that complaints based on discrimination against persons with disabilities will increase in the future, due to the new requirements in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.⁴¹ One witness testified from her own personal experience that housing which advertises itself as accessible to the handicapped does not always live up to its promises.⁴² There is apparently no authority that assures persons with disabilities that businesses which post access signs are, in fact, accessible. While this can present difficulties enough in ordinary business activities, it becomes especially troublesome in the context of housing. It is virtually impossible for a person to

examine every aspect of a new apartment or home prior to moving in. The disabled person must place a high degree of reliance on these signs. A later discovery that mailboxes or other facilities are designed for access only to the able-bodied can be more than just distressful.

Housing discrimination against the family form most commonly adopted by homosexual couples not only exists, it is many times quite blatant. The Commission heard testimony that real estate agents may refuse to sell a house to a same-sex couple.⁴³ Some sexual orientation discrimination is more subtle, though. Landlords may look at a same-sex couple who wish to rent an apartment, and announce that the renters must be married. This would be illegal in at least two ways. Requiring a marriage certificate is a roundabout way of denying housing to same-sex couples, and would thus be discrimination based on sexual orientation. While a heterosexual couple could accede to the landlord's demand, and get married, a homosexual couple could not, and would be irrevocably denied this housing opportunity.

But requiring a marriage certificate from renters would also violate the broader state law that prohibits discrimination based on marital status.⁴⁴ The Commission received documentation of exactly this kind of discrimination.⁴⁵ In addition, there are two cases currently in the courts in which landlords have denied rental housing to unmarried couples.⁴⁶ If the theories of either or both of these landlords are accepted, the legislature's prohibition of marital status discrimination would be meaningless.

The Long Beach Fair Housing Foundation has a policy to check for potential housing discrimination by sending out testers, agents of the foundation who pose as renters who are members of certain protected classes. This process has turned up evidence of blatant racial discrimination, and is a useful tool for enforcing the antidiscrimination laws. There are, however, no testers for

discrimination based on marital status, family size, or sexual orientation.

44. The Commission recommends that the City Council provide a mechanism to monitor housing that displays handicapped access signs that do not truly reflect the housing's accessibility.

45. The Commission recommends that the City Council urge the Long Beach Fair Housing Foundation, in cooperation with the city, to conduct an outreach program to the Asian-Pacific communities, to inform them of the provisions of the housing discrimination laws.

46. The Commission recommends to the City Council that the City Attorney join other municipal law enforcement agencies in filing a brief in the case of Donahue v. California Fair Employment and Housing Commission, to assure that the protections guaranteed by the legislature's prohibition against marital status discrimination, as well as the city's policy of protecting families, continue to have meaning for Long Beach residents.

47. The Commission recommends that the City Council urge the Long Beach Fair Housing Foundation to more aggressively monitor discrimination based on marital status, family size and sexual orientation, by providing field testers, or auditors to document these kinds of discrimination.

E. Health Care

The situation facing modern families was set out eloquently by the Joint Legislative Task Force:

One of the most basic functions of the family is to provide for the physical and mental health and well-being of family members. Yet many families are unable to fulfill this fundamental role. Over five million Californians have no health coverage, private or public. Without insurance, the cost of medical care is prohibitive for the vast majority of the uninsured. Even families with health coverage face financial disaster in

the event a family member requires nursing home care, or is stricken with a catastrophic illness.⁴⁷

Long Beach is one of only four municipalities in California that has chosen not to rely exclusively on the county for public health care services. The city's Department of Health and Human Services administers a wide variety of health-related programs, including:

- programs providing health services for women, infants and children (the WIC program);
- child immunization;
- sexually transmitted disease clinics;
- refugee services;
- health care for the elderly;
- programs for the control of communicable diseases;
- AIDS testing and education;⁴⁸

The Commission heard testimony from several witnesses about the way families in Long Beach are affected by various health care issues. The City's social service grant program provides funding to non-profit organizations to address community social service and health needs. The Board of Health and Human Services determines the categories of need to be funded and recommends specific programs for funding to the Mayor and the City Council. These grants should be utilized to strengthen family relationships in Long Beach.

48. The Commission recommends that the City Council recognize the needs of families in Long Beach and recommend for social service grant funding projects that help strengthen family relationships.

1. Infants and Children

The Department of Health and Human Services has primary responsibility for serving the preventive health care needs of the city's children. This includes the critical period prior to birth. There has been much recent evidence of the effects of prenatal care on newborn infants.⁴⁹ Mothers who are not aware of the importance of prenatal care, or are unable to secure adequate care during pregnancy, are much more likely to deliver low birthweight babies, or babies at risk of early health problems and, in too many cases, infant mortality.⁵⁰

Another problem that is appearing more and more frequently is the incidence of drug-addicted babies. These infants require the most extraordinary care.

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed the Maternal/Child Health program, a master program that has an important component devoted to promoting adequate prenatal care. The program provides prenatal information and referrals to mothers who are most at risk of needing prenatal care. Until recently, the Maternal/Child Health program operated one program that was specifically targeted to the problems of cocaine-addicted mothers, the Matrix Cocaine Program.

But these programs are already overburdened, and the problems appear to be increasing. The Department currently turns away approximately 45 women per month who need prenatal care.⁵¹ These women must go to County USC Medical Center. Once there, however, when they identify themselves as being from Long Beach, they are often referred back to the city. In the meantime, these women are not receiving the prenatal care their developing infants need.

Part of the problem lies in the fact that only four Long Beach doctors who specialize in obstetrics/gynecology accept Medi-Cal. A recent increase in Medi-Cal payments, however, may bring more

doctors into the system. The Department also has an outreach program that advises doctors on how best to work with the Medi-Cal system.

The Matrix Cocaine program was funded by the County, and those funds have recently been exhausted. The only other option for drug-addicted women in Long Beach is to travel to the program at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. The Commission heard evidence, though, that that program's caseload is so great, women may have to wait months for care.⁵²

Once children are born, the Department continues to provide services, including nutrition vouchers through the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC). Such programs, though, have been the subject of funding reductions at the state level, and have also seen an increased demand. Food coupons once available in sufficient numbers for children until they reached the age of five years are currently available for many fewer children. Further cutbacks could mean the Department will have enough vouchers only for children up to six months old.⁵³

In the past two years, the Department has recorded an alarming increase in the number of diagnosed measles cases in children. The Department declared an official epidemic of measles in 1990. Additional resources will clearly be needed to contain this threat to the lives of healthy children.

49. The Commission recommends that the City of Long Beach continue to seek supplemental and increased funding for program areas that work with infants and children, including:
- Prenatal care
 - Drug addicted babies
 - Measles prevention and outbreaks
 - Nutritional supplement program (WIC)

2. AIDS

Perhaps more than any other disease, AIDS has exposed how fragile our current health care system is. While AIDS can strike in virtually any age group, it has disproportionately affected those who are in the healthiest years of their lives. Health care systems find themselves having to deal with this new group of chronically ill patients, while continuing to bear the responsibility of caring for the ordinary illnesses and injuries, and the age groups who have traditionally required special attention from physicians, the very young and the very old.

One witness testified that current figures suggest there are approximately 4,000 people in Long Beach who are infected with the HIV virus.⁵⁴ So far there have been an estimated 400 deaths in Long Beach from AIDS.⁵⁵ But for every person who contracts the virus, many others are also affected by the disease because of their relationship to the infected person. These include primarily family members. As with any other catastrophic illness, the infected person wants first to turn to her or his family.

There can be little doubt that broad societal discrimination continues to exist against those with the disease, those who have tested positive for the virus which causes it, and even those who are perceived as being at-risk for contracting the virus. But there is one special, and particularly harmful example of this discrimination. Sometimes our prejudices run so deep they can turn us against our own family members. The Assistant Director of the Long Beach AIDS Network testified that she has had experience with families who have abandoned their own children upon learning of an AIDS diagnosis.⁵⁶

Families who find themselves personally facing the virus may be especially vulnerable to the rumors, misinformation and

prejudice surrounding HIV infection and AIDS. The Commission heard testimony that blood relatives may often abandon their family responsibilities upon learning that a loved one has AIDS.⁵⁷ While many persons with AIDS (who generally prefer to be called by the acronym, PWA's) have loving and supportive families, many more find themselves isolated from family structures just at the moment they need their families most.

The city has expressed its commitment to work against the tide of prejudice in this area. The city's AIDS Antidiscrimination Ordinance prohibits discrimination in the areas of:

- employment
- housing
- the provision of goods and services
(including city services)⁵⁸

Discrimination is illegal against those with AIDS or the AIDS Related Complex (ARC), those who have tested positive for the HIV virus, or those perceived to have any of these conditions.⁵⁹ But this ordinance is not sufficient to solve the problem that exists within families who fear the disease, and who ought to be the primary source of care for infected individuals.

Families Who Care is one private, local organization formed to provide education and support to the family members of PWAs.⁶⁰ This group has found some very real and serious problems among these families. For example, the group has had experience with family members who are afraid to go to professional counselors, or even to their own clergy, in order to seek help.⁶¹ Families Who Care provides a surrogate extended family to these people in need. It is a resource pool of those who have had to deal with the unique aspects of this disease and are willing to share their experiences in order to help others.

Another service provided by Families Who Care is the Family Support Fund to help bring distant families to a PWA who may not be able to travel.⁶² A program similar to this has been pioneered in Redondo Beach. Local hotels, at the urging of a church group, have agreed to provide discounted room rates to visiting families.⁶³ This is one notable example of how corporations can make charitable contributions to the community at relatively low cost, in order to help solve difficult problems.

Another problem facing families of PWAs is that the PWA requires extraordinary care and attention. Because AIDS destroys the body's natural immune system, PWAs are vulnerable to thousands of diseases and infections. No two people will be subject to the same combination of symptoms, making each PWA a unique medical case.

But this can take a tremendous toll on the caregivers. Some caregivers are forced to give up their jobs. Others may be elderly parents, who may not be physically able to provide all the care the PWA needs. And in all cases, tending for a PWA requires around-the-clock attention.

To deal with this strain on the caregiver, programs called "respite care" have been developed.⁶⁴ Respite care programs provide caregivers with an occasional day off. This allows the caregiver the opportunity to "recharge" and helps to avoid burnout or emotional and physical exhaustion. While such programs have usually arisen in the context of care for the elderly, the idea is applicable in any situation where a family becomes responsible for a member who requires extraordinary attention. Respite care is especially appropriate in the context of AIDS.

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50. The Commission recommends that the City continue to work jointly with organizations such as Families Who Care to develop an AIDS education program directed specifically toward families. Materials

should be designed to deal sensitively with the central issues surrounding family abandonment of a member with AIDS: homophobia, disapproval of drug use, societal prejudice and misinformation. The program should incorporate support groups and medical personnel and should deal realistically with the issue of death.

51. The Commission commends the City Council for convening an AIDS Task Force to more effectively coordinate a city response to the many issues surrounding this disease and advise the city council in this matter.

52. The Commission recommends that the City Council explore a partnership with local hotels to provide discounted rates for the out-of-town families of Long Beach PWAs similar to the plan developed in the City of Redondo Beach.

53. The Commission recommends that the City Council encourage the development of respite care programs that will assist family members who care for elders and those with AIDS.

3. Seniors

As noted above, the tremendous advances in medical science, as well as increases in the information about nutrition, exercise, and general care for our bodies, have enlarged the average lifespan of Americans considerably. Over the coming years and decades, we can expect to see more and more elderly people in our communities.

While their health will be generally better than it has ever been, age takes its toll on all human bodies. The Department of Health and Human Services has worked in cooperation with the Senior Service Center and the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide senior health screenings and some health care programs.

The Senior Service Center is the site of a Health Department clinic. The clinic provides a number of services, including

podiatry, dental care and pap smears for women. But the facility is not easily accessible to seniors who live outside the immediate neighborhood of the Center. To remedy this, the Department has secured a van which can take some of the clinic's health services to those who have difficulty coming to the Center.

The Commission heard testimony about two issues that need to be addressed. First, because of the numerous health-care providers most elderly people see--various doctors and specialists in different fields, and pharmacists--as well as the wide variety of over-the-counter drugs available, seniors may be taking different medications that will counter one another's effects, or even combine to produce harmful results.⁶⁵

Seniors can avoid this problem with a system of medication counseling. Funds for such a program were, until recently, available, but have been discontinued.⁶⁶ Modern computer technology and networking make a centralized system more feasible today than at any time in the past. A central cost of the program, though, would be a trained pharmacist.

Similar to the medication counseling programs is the idea of a case management system, suggested by the Superintendent of Senior Services.⁶⁷ This system would coordinate the financial, health, and housing needs of individuals who might need help in keeping track of these things.

Another important area for seniors is mental health. Untreated depression is one of the biggest problems facing older adults.⁶⁸ One of the most persistent barriers to effective treatment is the unwillingness of many seniors to attend group sessions. But one-to-one therapy is extremely cost-intensive, and all but unworkable on the limited funds that would be available. On the other hand, untreated depression can lead to alcoholism and even suicide.⁶⁹

There is evidence that the Senior Services Center currently serves a population that is disproportionately White and English-speaking.⁷⁰ This is a problem the Center is committed to addressing. Two approaches to the problem were suggested: outreach programs to minority areas, and the use of more minority staff members at the Center.

Finally, for those seniors who are being cared for by their families, the issue of respite care may arise. This is especially true for families of the frail elderly who require extraordinary attention. St. Mary's Medical Center has a respite care program in existence that could be used as a model.

54. The Commission recommends that the City Council urge the Governor and the Legislature to reinstate health care funding that was subject to cuts so that the city can resume its system of medication counseling.

55. The Commission recommends that the City of Long Beach encourage and support expanded use of a case management system to coordinate the financial, housing and health needs of seniors who have severe difficulties in coordinating these needs for themselves.

56. The Commission commends the City Council for its strong stand in favor of maintaining the expansion of mental health programs provided by the state and county. The Commission urges the Council to continue viewing mental health services, such as those available to seniors, as a priority.

57. The Commission recommends that the City Council develop a minority outreach program at the Senior Services Center to assure that elderly members of currently underserved populations are aware that the Center's services are available to all. As part of this effort, the number of minority staff members at the Center should also be increased.

58. The Commission commends St. Mary's Medical Center for its successful Respite Care program. The Commission recommends to the City Council that it review St. Mary's program and consider ways to implement it as part of other city programs which would provide aid to the families of seniors and persons with AIDS.

F. Public Safety

1. Family Violence and Abuse

Citizens expect that the city will furnish adequate measures to assure public safety. While public safety, for the most part, is an issue that affects families only indirectly, there is one crucial area where the city's power to enforce the law has a direct effect on families. That is the area of family violence.

Violence among family members is a special case of violent crime since it occurs within the confines of the home, and the family relationship. Law enforcement officers do not ordinarily have the justification to enter private homes, and must generally depend on an abused family member to report these crimes. But not all abused family members make such reports. As pointed out by a California commission dealing with the training of peace officers,

"To be abused by a spouse, a parent, a trusted adult, or by one's own child, or to witness such abuse carries with it a particular agony. Victims wrestle with feelings of fear, loyalty, love, guilt and shame. In this they often face conflicts not experienced by those attacked by strangers."⁷¹

While family violence can occur among any family members, discussion tends to center around three particular relationships in which abuse is likely to occur: parents abusing children, spouse abuse (an older category that is now being expanded to include the abuse of adult domestic partners), and adult children abusing elderly family members.

a. Child Abuse

Child abuse is perhaps the most emotional of all forms of family violence. The picture of a dependent child being psychologically or physically abused by a trusted adult, the child all but helpless to prevent the violence, shocks the conscience. The image becomes even bleaker when the future effects of this violence are taken into consideration. Figures consistently show that children who are the victims of abuse themselves become abusive parents, following the model they have learned in childhood.⁷² In addition, when abused children become adults, they are more likely than non-abused children to become alcoholic, experience severe depression, and attempt suicide.⁷³

Because of this, there is a strong state policy requiring adults who observe the effects of child abuse to report their observations. Schoolteachers and child-care providers are especially important in making these reports. Potential child abuse cases are reported to the County of Los Angeles Department of Children's Services Emergency Response Program.⁷⁴

The number of cases in Long Beach is staggering. The Commission heard testimony from the supervisor of the DCS intake program that the county receives roughly 6-800 reports of potential child abuse each month from the City of Long Beach.⁷⁵ The city school district is the largest reporter.⁷⁶

b. Spouse Abuse and Partner Abuse

Nearly all married couples engage in domestic disputes, some of which become quite heated. But there are times when these disputes can rise to the level of criminal activity. When one spouse's violence amounts to criminal assault or battery, the public interest in safety overrides the ordinary privacy we give to family relations. When the battered spouse reports the crime, the battering spouse cannot claim any privilege of family privacy.

The public policy in favor of harmonious family and domestic relations is so strong that the California legislature enacted a special provision to protect family relationships from domestic violence and abuse.⁷⁷ This law gives prosecutors the discretion to raise the charge of battery or assault to a felony, even when the injuries would not otherwise call for a felony charge, if the parties are living together. This would also permit courts to impose longer terms of imprisonment on offenders.

The law recognizes the importance of a broader definition of "family" than just marriage, since it applies to "cohabiting" couples. The policy to prevent violence within the private realm of a family is the strongest justification for this expansion. The law sends a signal to cohabiting couples that violence within the home is now subject to especially grave treatment in the public justice system.

This policy, though, breaks down entirely in one significant area. The law applies only to cohabiting couples of the opposite sex. Thus, violence between same-sex cohabitators is not considered "domestic" violence. Apparently, the legislature considered same-sex cohabitators as mere "roommates," without any kind of family relationship. The law recognizes that opposite-sex couples may be living together in a committed family relationship, even though they have not married, but ignores the fact that same-sex couples may be members of one another's family.

This rationale fails for a number of reasons. First, it protects opposite-sex "roommates," since it does not require any proof of a family relationship when giving prosecutors discretion to seek felony charges. Thus, two unrelated and uncommitted people sharing an apartment for economic reasons come within the law's protection without any reason based in family policy.

In addition, the law excludes even recognized legal or blood relatives of the same sex, such as two brothers living together, or even a single mother who abuses her daughter, from its protection, while protecting parallel opposite-sex blood or legal relatives, such as a brother and sister, or abusive mother and her son. Prosecutors would have to prosecute violence within such domestic relationships as ordinary misdemeanors.

The same applies to homosexual couples whose relationships are verified domestic partnerships. While they come within the legal definition of "family," they are excluded from the policy to prevent domestic violence. While law enforcement is sometimes unhelpful in keeping statistics on this form of domestic violence, available figures suggest that the incidence of violence between same-sex couples is comparable to incidence rates for opposite-sex couples. New York's Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence project, for example, discovered that, without any special outreach program, 12% of the calls they received related to same-sex domestic violence.⁷⁸

An attempt was made in Sacramento last term to amend the law to correct this situation by including same-sex partner domestic violence, but it was defeated by a very close vote in the senate. The two state senators who represent portions of Long Beach split on this bill: Robert Beverly voted not to amend the law, while Ralph Dills voted to add the amendment.⁷⁹

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59. The Commission recommends that the City Council direct the city's lobbyist in Sacramento to urge the state senators representing the city to vote in favor of laws that promote the city's policy of recognizing the danger of all domestic violence, regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of the cohabitants.
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c. Elder Abuse

When elderly parents begin to experience failing health, or lose the ability to fully support themselves, they may become dependent on their children for support. In the more extreme cases, California law places a duty on children who are able to, to support their indigent parents.⁸⁰ More and more often this requires the parent to move in with her or his adult children.

But the addition of a dependent elder to the household has an effect on family dynamics. The earlier dependency of the child on the parent is reversed, and confusion may result. Medical bills may be a drain on family resources. Seniors may require extraordinary care and, in cases like Alzheimer's Disease, close and continuous supervision.⁸¹

All of this can lead to arguments, stress, and, in some cases, abuse. Elder abuse is probably the most underreported form of family violence. The Superintendent of Senior Services told the Commission it is a "hidden problem."⁸² Seniors may not report abuse for a number of reasons. They may be unaware that the system provides them with legal recourse. They may be afraid of retaliation from the abusive family member. Or they may fear institutionalization as a worse fate than living with the abuser.

Nevertheless, statistics show that elder abuse is a very real problem. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services believes that, at a minimum, 4% of seniors in the county are the victims of abuse.⁸³

2. Police Department Response

The Long Beach Police Department has recently been criticized, and is under much public scrutiny. The Commission also heard testimony critical of the Department. One witness testified that, while there are continued claims that Long Beach does not have enough police, the force currently has unfilled vacancies.⁸⁴ Another testified that there is continuing discrimination by the

Police Department against lesbians and gay men.⁸⁵ A third pointed out that the police department advisory committee is virtually nonexistent, a situation that may endanger relations between the police and all citizens, especially those in minority communities.⁸⁶ A member of the disabled community testified that police may too easily mistake some forms of disability for intoxication or resistance to police authority, due to insufficient education about disabilities.⁸⁷

There are always criticisms to be made about any public body, and the police department is no exception to this rule. It is easier, however, to criticize than it is to present workable solutions. Particularly with regard to family violence, the police are a critical first contact point for many who are victims of abuse. The public's perception of how the department will respond to this problem if it is reported is therefore of central concern to the Commission. The city's stand must be unequivocal that victims of family violence will be treated with respect, privacy and the utmost support from the criminal justice system.

The state has mandated that all law enforcement agencies have written policies and procedures for dealing with domestic violence, developing systems for recording and reporting domestic violence calls, and implementing training programs for handling domestic violence cases.⁸⁸ The Long Beach Police Department has been reluctant to publicly release either their figures on domestic violence, or their policies for training officers in this area and their procedures for dealing with actual cases. While the specifics of individual cases are clearly entitled to the highest degree of privacy, the policies and compiled statistics are important tools for developing appropriate public policy.

For example, in the area of child abuse, one witness testified that, on the whole, the response of the Long Beach Police Department to reports of child abuse has been good.⁸⁹ But the same

witness also testified that it appears there are times when police do not have adequate resources to deal with calls.⁹⁰ An independent review of the number of reported calls, the departmental priority given to child abuse reports, and the department's resource allocations would assist in making a public assessment of the department's handling of these calls.

This is especially true for reports of partner abuse and elder abuse. It is impossible to know if the department gives priority to reports of same-sex domestic violence, which would be prosecuted under the usual laws of criminal battery. Similarly, if the department has a policy regarding elder abuse, it should be made available to the public, along with any statistics it may have, so that potentially violent adult children will know that the police are vigilant in this area, and so that potential victims will know that there are people within the system who care about their well-being, and will protect their rights.

Supervision of the Police Department's policies and procedures is within the jurisdiction of the Public Safety Advisory Commission. Release of the documents that show the department has complied with the state law mandating domestic violence reporting, training and written policy to the Commission will assure that the department is accountable to the public, without jeopardizing the privacy interests of any abuse victims.

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60. The Commission recommends to the City Council that the agencies policing Long Beach release their policies, statistics and procedures mandated by Cal. Penal Code §§ 13519 and 13700 et seq. to the Public Safety Advisory Commission so that those policies, statistics and procedures can be evaluated in light of declared Long Beach public policy with regard to families.
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61. The Commission recommends to the City Council that the agencies policing Long Beach have a consistent policy on domestic violence which treats all calls that come from cohabitators with the same priority, regardless of the gender of the parties.
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3. The City Prosecutor

The City Prosecutor is responsible for bringing criminal charges that arise from violations of city ordinances, as well as state-defined misdemeanors. The City Prosecutor also has the authority to render legal opinions for the city regarding ordinances and state laws.

While the prosecutor's office has been sensitive to the full range of issues surrounding family violence, there is currently no written policy for prosecuting such cases. As with the Police Department, an important public policy is served by having an explicit and public policy regarding family violence. The policy statement sends a dual message: to potential abusers, that their actions will not go unpunished; to potential victims, the clear message that the city stands behind them, thus encouraging them to report a violent crime that, in most cases, cannot otherwise be prosecuted. To the public at large, a verifiable policy makes explicit that the city places the highest priority on peacefully resolving family disputes.

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62. The Commission recommends that the City Council develop a specific policy for dealing with family violence. The policy should make clear that violence within any family will be subject to vigorous prosecution and that the City Prosecutor will treat all family relationships with equal respect. Once formulated, aspects of the policy that will help members of the public in reporting family violence and securing convictions should be disseminated as widely as possible.
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4. The Emergency Plan

The Commission heard testimony on a separate issue related to public safety: the city's Emergency Plan.⁹¹ In the case of a major earthquake, fire, or other disaster, the city, in 1982, promulgated its Emergency Plan.⁹² According to the Plan's Letter of Promulgation:

"The basic tenets of emergency preparedness/civil defense are self-help and mutual aid."⁹³

The Plan, however, makes the assumption throughout that the citizens are able-bodied. Particularly in those cases where evacuation would be necessary, consideration must be made of persons with disabilities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has done just this, exemplified in its booklet, "Preparedness for People with Disabilities: Earthquake Hazards Reduction Series #9."

On a more immediate level, the emergency 911 system makes no provision for identifying persons with disabilities to emergency response teams. Such systems are available, though, through the use of advanced computer networks.

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63. The Commission recommends that the City Council's commission dealing with matters affecting the disabled community review the Emergency Plan and make specific recommendations so that the Plan will take into consideration the needs of disabled members of the community during emergencies.
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NOTES

1. Recommendations were made regarding education and the schools by the following: testimony on June 8, 1990 from: Dianne Piastro, Joan Filbey, Jack Newby; testimony on June 21, 1990 from: Marilyn Wyman, Tonia Uranga, Susan Matranga-Watson, Linda Vizzini, Mitch Mason; testimony on July 12, 1990 from: Catherine Ryan, Thomas F. Coleman, Doreen Cheseboro.
2. Project 10 proposal (Supplement, p. 99-102).
3. Id.
4. Id.
5. Long Beach 2000: The Strategic Plan, p. 36.
6. Long Beach 2000: The Strategic Plan--Progress Report on Implementation, p. 18.
7. Testimony of Dianne Piastro, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 5).
8. Id.
9. Testimony of Mark Malone, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 8).
10. Id. (Supplement, p. 9).
11. Testimony of Doris Topsy-Elvord, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 30-31).
12. Testimony of Vora Kanthoul Huy, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 46); Testimony of Doris Topsy-Elvord, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 30-31); Testimony of Olivia Herrera, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 33).
13. Testimony of Bernie Sanchez, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 54).
14. Toward a State of Esteem: The Final Report of the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility, p. 103 (1990)
15. Id. at 107-09.
16. Testimony of Bernie Sanchez, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 53-54).
17. Testimony of Joan Filbey, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 6).
18. Id.

19. Housing California Families: The End of the American Dream?-- A Report by the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family (June 1990 update of First Year Report), p. 1.
20. Id. at p. 3. California's median price was \$165,000, while the median for the nation was \$89,000.
21. Long Beach 2000: The Strategic Plan, p. 26.
22. Housing California's Families: The End of the American Dream?, p. 9 (June, 1990).
23. Id.
24. Long Beach 2000: The Strategic Plan, p. 26.
25. Id. Figures are for 1983. With reductions in both state and federal subsidies, the percentage of assisted families may be even lower in recent years.
26. Housing California's Families: The End of the American Dream?, p. 17 (June, 1990).
27. Testimony of Ralph Laudenslayer, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 52).
28. "Family Often Guilty in Abuse of Elderly," L.A. Daily Journal, August 16, 1989 (Supplement, p. 86).
29. Housing California's Families: The End of the American Dream?, p. 17 (June, 1990).
30. Testimony of Lupe Macker, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 11).
31. Id. (Supplement, p. 10).
32. Id.
33. Id.
34. Id.
35. Long Beach Housing Authority Administrative Plan.
36. Testimony of Ingrid Bullock, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 12).
37. Id.
38. Id.
39. Id.

40. Id. (Supplement, p. 13).
41. Id.
42. Testimony of Peggy Oliveri, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 7).
43. Testimony of Jack Newby, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 14-15).
44. Government Code § 12955 (1985 Amendment).
45. Supplement, pp. 87-95.
46. Donahue v. California Fair Employment and Housing Commission, Appeals Court Case #B 052118 (case originally filed in Downey); Smith v. California Fair Employment and Housing Commission, Case #C 007654 (Northern California).
47. Falling Through the Safety Net: The Health Care Crisis and California's Families--A Report by the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, p. 1 (May, 1990).
48. Testimony of Diana Bonta, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 21).
49. Falling Through the Safety Net: The Health Care Crisis and California's Families--A Report by the Joint Select Task Force on the Changing Family, pp. 7-11 (May, 1990).
50. Infant mortality rates have increased dramatically in recent years. For Latinos, particularly, the increases are alarming. Since 1987, the rate of infant mortality--death before the infant reaches age one--have increased by a third. Stillbirths have increased by 45%. "Latino Infant Death Rate Climbs Sharply in County," L.A. Times, August 30, 1990.
51. Testimony of Diana Bonta, in reply to Testimony of Mitch Mason, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 42).
52. Testimony of Mitch Mason, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 41).
53. Testimony of Diana Bonta, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. ____).
54. Testimony of Sue Caves, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 17).
55. Id.
56. Id.
57. Id.
58. Long Beach Municipal Code, Ch. 8.94.
59. Id.

60. Testimony of Sue Caves, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 18).
61. Id.
62. Id.
63. "South Bay Hotels Helping Families of AIDS Patients," L.A. Times, July 11, 1990 (Supplement, p. 96-97).
64. Task Force on Family Diversity, City of Los Angeles: Final Report pp. 71-72 (1988).
65. Testimony of Anita Loos-Hannifan, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 28).
66. Id.
67. Testimony of Ralph Laudenslayer, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 51-52).
68. Testimony of Anita Loos-Hanifan, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 29).
69. Id.
70. Testimony of Ralph Laudenslayer, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 53).
71. Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, Guidelines and Curriculum for Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence, p. 1 (Sacramento, 1985).
72. Task Force on Family Diversity, City of Los Angeles: Final Report pp.49-50 (1988).
73. Id.
74. Testimony of Mitch Mason, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 40).
75. Id.
76. Id.
77. Cal. Penal Code § 273.5.
78. Task Force on Family Diversity, City of Los Angeles: Final Report, p. 51. (1988). It makes no difference to the battered partner what the gender of the abusive person is. In a recent case, prosecutors in Los Angeles successfully convicted a woman who had beaten her lesbian lover after presenting evidence of the "battered woman syndrome." "Lesbian Convicted of Beating Her Lover," L.A. Times, October 30, 1990.

79. S.B. 2238. The senate vote was 16-18.
80. Cal. Civ. Code § 270 (c).
81. Alzheimer's disease is a severe problem among the elderly. See Testimony of Ralph Laudenslayer, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 52).
82. Id.
83. Task Force on Family Diversity, City of Los Angeles: Supplement, Part Two, pp. S-723-24 (1988).
84. Testimony of Emma Ruchames, July 12, 1990 (Supplement, p. 46).
85. Testimony of Jack Newby, June 8, 1990 (Supplement, p. 16).
86. Testimony of Tonia Uranga, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 28).
87. Testimony of Harley Rubenstein, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 34).
88. Cal. Penal Code §§ 13519 and 13700 et seq.
89. Testimony of Mitch Mason, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 41).
90. Id.
91. Testimony of Harley Rubenstein, June 21, 1990 (Supplement, p. 34).
92. City of Long Beach Emergency Plan (March 1982).
93. Id., p. I.

VII. Conclusion

While many people have expressed concern over the "breakdown of the American family" in recent years, there is much to suggest that this concern comes, at least in part, out of a fear that a very narrow family form is being threatened. This oversimplifies a very complex set of social and personal circumstances. The Commission heard over and over again from witnesses who came from a wide variety of family forms. All of them felt the highest sense of responsibility to their loved ones, as well as a broader commitment to Long Beach as a whole. The problem was not that their families had broken down, but that government policies that have not been examined in decades had made carrying out their family responsibilities more difficult. Stepparents, single mothers, unmarried couples, multi-generational families, lesbian lifemates raising their children, divorced or widowed individuals, and spouses who must both work in order to afford a decent standard of living, all testified that what is needed is a good, close look at the city policies which make life harder for families, and a thoughtful and realistic look at what families really are.

By their nature, family relationships are the most intimate that a person has. They are not transitory, but exist and need attention day-to-day. The idea of Family was never meant to be a one-size-fits-all mandate for controlling the private lives of citizens. Nor in our diverse and pluralistic society was it meant to be a tool to punish nonconformance. The city's interest in families is not that they be alike, but that they work.

The best a government can do is encourage families to function as well as they can, and recognize the obligations family members actually have to one another. Our study found that defining only a narrow set of relationships as "family" is too limiting as an

approach, since it leaves out so many in society who do maintain genuine, loving and committed relationships that benefit all of us. Stepfamilies, in-laws, elderly parents, and foster children are all sometimes defined as "family" and sometimes not. And one primary committed relationship, domestic partners, is nearly always ignored. If such intimate, committed and important relationships are to be excluded from the definition of "family," the reasons for doing so must be extremely important, and articulated.

The better approach is to test the quality of a relationship against reality. The analysis then must include an examination of the purpose of the government's policy, i.e. what problem is the policy or benefit designed to address; what benefit is being offered as a remedy; and whether the personal relationship of the parties is close enough to be included. If there is potential for abuse of the government policy or program, proof of the family relationship may legitimately be required. In some instances, a simple declaration or proof of residence in the same household will be enough. Other times documentation of a legal or blood relationship will be necessary.

This kind of analysis serves both the city's administrative needs and recognizes the reality of family diversity. Where certainty is needed, it must be provided. But when families are functioning as families, they should not be discouraged or excluded.

It is the duty of this Commission to see that the many voices in Long Beach are all heard. Our existence is required for the very reason that some in the past have been ignored. This report is central to carrying out our mandate, not because it favors any particular excluded group, but because it speaks up for everyone. Our families give each of us a foundation and a refuge. No matter who we call our family, or what we call our home, we all share the need for someone to call family, someplace to call home.

The Commission thanks the City Council for its interest in this issue. The Commission also thanks the various departments, commissions, agencies and individuals throughout Long Beach that have assisted in this study, both from within the city government and from the private sector. Their cooperation, interest and enthusiasm demonstrate that the council's interest in families was timely and appropriate.

Finally, the Commission would like to emphasize that the recommendations in this Report come, overwhelmingly, from the public testimony we heard. It is clear that unexamined assumptions about family policy will not be accepted any longer by those who are adversely affected. Since the concerns expressed to us are not likely to be resolved without action, the Commission calls on both the City Council and the witnesses, as well as their organizations, to work together to implement the recommendations in this Report.