

MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
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January 19, 2000

TO JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE:

I am writing on behalf of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference to voice concern **and opposition** regarding - legislation -- **relative to health insurance benefits for Domestic Partners (H.B. 4947) of the town of Amherst.**

This legislation would provide health benefits to those town employees living together as homosexual domestic partners. The town of Amherst, through this legislation, will be obligated to treat this relationship in the same manner as a married couple who were joined by a vow of fidelity in the sacredness of marriage.

Whereas it is an issue of social justice, that all people have access to adequate health care, I am very concerned and saddened that this social inequity be resolved by broadening the definition of family and thus undermining the family in society. Please note the vague language **in line ten** of the legislation.

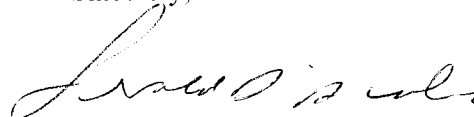
The role of government in a civilized society should be to acknowledge the special status of a man and a woman united in marriage. For more than two millennium, the institution of marriage has been the only effective cultivation of the family, the surest protection and advocate for children, and the guardian of public morality.

This legislation could dramatically change the lives of a majority of town citizens, suddenly devaluing a sacred trust, which has been so central to the establishment of family life and a building block of society. Your task, as a Legislator is difficult, as you find the best way, through legislation, to foster the common good.

The Conference supports equal civil rights for all persons. We oppose any and all unjust discrimination against persons who are homosexual. This Bill and similar initiatives in our Commonwealth, confuse civil rights and family benefits. In so doing, they deprive unjustly the family of its rightful place in society and exacerbate social tensions that work to undermine the common good.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask this Committee to give this Bill an adverse report.

Sincerely,



Gerald D'Avolio,
Executive Director, M.C.C.

GD:am

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