

MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
THE CATHOLIC CENTER

55 Franklin Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02110-1301 (617) 574-0771
FAX (617) 574-9227

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

BERNARD CARDINAL LAW
Archbishop of Boston

MOST REVEREND SEAN P. O'MALLEY, O.F.M. Cap.
Bishop of Fall River

MOST REVEREND DANIEL P. REILLY
Bishop of Worcester

MOST REVEREND THOMAS L. DUPRE
Bishop of Springfield

April 9, 1997

TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON INSURANCE:

My name is Gerald D'Avolio. I am an Attorney and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference, which represents the four Roman Catholic Dioceses of the Commonwealth.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to speak on behalf of the Conference on record before this Committee in opposition to **S. 718: "An Act Relative to Equal Employment Benefits for Public Sector Employees."**

This Bill would mandate certain benefits to **public sector employees** who are living together as domestic partners.

This bill is unjust to true families and every other friendship that does not arbitrarily claim the title of "domestic partners." Family benefits are provided by the state because of the intrinsic importance of stable family life for the good of society.

The Catholic Bishops said in their 1991 statement, Family: The Key to A Healthy Society, "No legislation should be passed and no program approved that compromises the family or takes from the family those roles and initiatives that are proper to it. The extension of the title "family" to gay and lesbian couples and the granting of health benefits to "domestic partners" on an equal plane with true families must be opposed and rejected as undermining the family in our society today."

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 and adverse report.

Sincerely,

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

GD:am