

Finance & Personnel Committee, Seattle City Council  
Public Hearing, June 26, 1989  
Event 13225 (00:04:26 – 00:10:19)

**Doreen McGrath:** Um, my name is Doreen McGrath. My address is 5236 South Fontenelle Place in Seattle, WA, 98118 and I'm here representing the Committee for Equal Rights at City Light, otherwise known as CERCL. I work at City Light and I am also a member of, um, the, *non*-dissenting members of Local 17, of which there are a few of us here. Um...CERCL has a long history of supporting the Fair Employment Practices Ordinance. We've worked very hard to strengthen it and to make it work for all people in Seattle, so of course, we support this bill. The, umm...and one thing--one of the things I firmly hope is that the Supreme Court never gets a hold of any of this, at least the current membership of the Supreme Court. Umm...because this is a basic civil rights issue and a basic employee rights issue that as other people have said should have been in effect--in effect long before this. Part of what always bugs me about, um, the fact that you have to be in a traditional relationship to get benefits is that it's, um, a--a morality, a traditional morality of the--the June and Ward family being applied to all people and that's just--that morality should not be legislated and it's very unfair. Um, so, we...the other thing I would like to say too, is that I think the, um, Sick Leave Share Program should be not--not just a pilot program, but should be implemented as something basic to do. We have...we all have our sick leave benefits, and then for those people who manage not to get sick very often and accrue a lot of sick leave, I think they have a right to do, and use it, as they please.

So...it's also in the spirit of this equality and the fact that I don't like, um, morality to be legislated, but I think there's some holes in the ordinance, as well as some unnecessary obstacles. Um, a lot of the holes have been pointed out. One thing I did like was Jesse Wineberry statement about it--you should just define "household members" and I think part of what he said is "household members that have a mutual responsibility with one another." So, I would like to support his idea on that. Just simply defining "domestic partnership" and not getting, um...very hung up on all the requirements to meet a "domestic partner." Um...some of the other holes are the things about the "may" for the Sick Leave Share Program that definitely should--should become "shall." Umm, I--I don't know why it says "may." Um, and one other thing I'd like to suggest is to look into some way to--to right past wrongs. The woman who was--has already been denied funeral leave, this should be made retroactive so that she can get her leave back and her money back, and, uh, if she doesn't sue the City first, which maybe she should.

[applause]

Um, some--some of the unnecessary and unneeded obstacles or ladders that people would have to climb in order to use this legislation: um, I don't think there needs to be a big fancy affidavit that you sign, um, detailing everything about wh--your domestic partner and stuff like that. In fact, I don't even think employees should have to give the name of their domestic partner to the City. All they need to say is "I'm married," or "I have a domestic partner." That's all the City needs to know. If they want to, um, if we do move into and I firmly, [sighs] it--urge you to--to move into the healthcare area and somebody wants to sign up their domestic partner for healthcare, then they should submit their name to the insurance company. I do not think that, um, discrimination in the City has stopped and certainly not discrimination against lesbian and gays. So in a lesbian-gay relationship, if you have to turn your name into your employer, you have now told them whether--that you are in a gay or lesbian relationship, um, and it's none of their business.

The, um, with the Share Program, I have some specific things about that. Again, I think that's set-up with way too many restrictions. I don't think there should be any restriction or limit to the number of hours an employee, any one employee, could give another employee. If they got the hours, they should be able to be used. It's as simple as that. It's unnecessary. I'd also—on--if you want to look on page five of the ord--proposed ordinance. I think you should delete lines 19 and 20 which talk about, um, employees who have now have this, um, employee who's going to receive the sick leave that's shared must have, in the past, prove that they are “diligently attempting to accrue sick leave reserve.” Um, for--I don't know how you would define “diligent,” and I think it's just unnecessary. You have a catastrophic illness, it's--you know, what can you do? You want the help. Um, in closing, these kinds of things, to me, um, legislate morality, even within this ordinance, and I would urge you to make some changes in that, to pass this ordinance, give us the benefits, and move on the rest of the benefits that were, um upheld in the HRD complaint.

Thank you.