

CRIMINAL LAW AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS SECTION



The District of Columbia Bar

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Sections Manager

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May 24, 1992

BY TELECOPIER

Carole Ann Cunningham

D.C. Bar

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RE: Subsequent Public Statement

Committees:

Criminal Rules and Procedure

Domestic Violence

Indian and Tribal Rights

Military and Veterans Rights

Rights of the Elderly and Handicapped

Dear Carole Ann:

Enclosed please find a public statement of the Criminal Law & Individual Rights Section concerning the Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992. THIS STATEMENT NEED NOT BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS REVIEW BECAUSE IT IS A "SUBSEQUENT" STATEMENT, WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTIONS GUIDELINE VII A.6, TO THE SECTION'S STATEMENT ON THE D.C. DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1991, WHICH PASSED REVIEW IN OCTOBER 1991. The D.C. Domestic Partnership Act was amended and then enacted as the Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992. The enclosed statement is identical in significant respects to the prior statement and not substantively different.

Sincerely yours,

Blair G. Brown

Co-Chair, Steering Committee

Enclosure

cc: Steering Committee Members

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**STATEMENT OF THE CRIMINAL LAW & INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS SECTION
 OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAR
 REGARDING THE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS EXPANSION ACT OF 1992**

Topic Sub-Groups
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Committees
 Criminal Rules and Legislation
 Juvenile Justice
 Lesbian and Gay Rights
 Military and Veterans Rights
 Rights of the Elderly and Handicapped

The Criminal Law and Individual Rights Section of the District of Columbia Bar ("the Section") has a membership of over 750 attorneys concerned about individual rights.

The Section recognizes that many persons in the District of Columbia who live together are not part of a "traditional" family of mother, father, and children living together. Yet many persons in nontraditional families together raise children, have other dependents, own homes and other property, and plan for a long life and future with each other, just as "traditional" families do. Both "traditional" and nontraditional families strengthen the fabric of society by providing emotional relationships and mutual sharing that give meaning and stability to family members as they confront the increasing stresses of life. However, only the "traditional" family currently enjoys the full protection and benefits of many District of Columbia laws.

The Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992 recognizes the existence and value of domestic partners who have a familial relationship characterized by mutual caring and the sharing of a mutual residence. The Act does so by providing for the registration of domestic partners; prohibiting discrimination against domestic partners in visitation rights at health care facilities; allowing sick, funeral, parental, and adoption leave for District government employees who must attend to the needs of their domestic partners and family members; providing for employee-financed health insurance coverage for the domestic partners and family members of District government employees; and allowing a tax deduction for private District employers who choose to offer health insurance for the domestic partners and family members of their employees.

The Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992 is an important step in affording rights to many residents of the District of Columbia. The Act is a lawful and admirable exercise of Home Rule by the District of Columbia. The Section urges the Congress to permit the Act to become law. *

* Standard Disclaimer: "The views expressed herein represent only those of the Criminal Law and Individual Rights Section of the District of Columbia Bar and not those of the District of Columbia Bar or of its Board of Governors."