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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.  
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON ORDINANCES, JUNE 19, 1984

My name is Frederick Levy and I am president of the Cambridge Civic Association. The Council enthusiastically supports strong protection of human rights in all aspects.

It is unfortunate that such ordinances are needed. Cambridge would be a much better city if people were not discriminated against because of their color, country of birth, economic status, sex, sexual orientation or for any other reason. It would be a better city if city services, housing, and employment were available equally to all.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. You do not need to be reminded again of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination's finding that there is discrimination in housing in Cambridge; that people of color, for example, do not always get an equal chance to get housing here.

I also suspect that poor people, families on welfare, and people of color do not have adequate information about the availability of housing, especially rent-controlled housing. Many units, I suspect, are passed from one tenant to another by word of mouth, so that low and moderate income people do not even have a chance to find out about them.

Employment opportunities are equally limited. While some city departments have made admirable progress in hiring and promoting women and people of color, others are still bastions of white males.

In the ordinances before this committee there are three particular points which should be included in the final ordinance which you present to the City Council. First, it must cover a broad range of areas where people might be discriminated against and a broad number of so-called "reasons" for discriminating. In particular, it should prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, family status, income source, and disability, in addition to the discriminations prohibited in traditional civil rights legislation. I can see no reason to condone discrimination or bias under any circumstances.

Second, it is important that these ordinances create a single agency where anyone can go who has a complaint about discrimination. Presently, there are too many different offices and agencies, city, state, and federal, and it can be difficult to know where to go, let alone whether there is anyplace to go.

Third, these proposals should give the agency the power to obtain testimony, set fines, and move the case to a higher authority if mediation should fail to reach a solution.

I urge this committee to recommend the strongest possible measures to protect the rights of our citizens.

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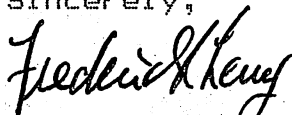
June 20, 1984

Mr. Paul Healy, City Clerk  
City Hall  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

Attached is a copy of my remarks made on June 19 to the Committee on Ordinances concerning proposed Human Rights ordinances. I assume that these remarks will be entered into the record.

Sincerely,



Frederick R. Levy  
President

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1983/84

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Comm. from Frederick R. Levy, Pres., CCA transmitting a copy of his remarks of June 19, 1984 to the Committee on Ordinances concerning the proposed human rights ordinances.

In City Council,

June 25, 1984

6/25/84

Referred to the  
Proposed Amendment  
file.

#24 on the  
Comm but 6/25/84