



Michigan Organization for

Human Rights

P.O. Box 445A • Detroit, Michigan 48232

TESTIMONY TO DETROIT CITY COUNCIL

Council President Henderson, Members of the Council, and Spokespeople from the Community-At-Large:

I represent the Detroit Committee of the Michigan Organization For Human Rights (MOHR). We support the amended definition of "family" as proposed in section (c). We believe that the amended definition as proposed in section (c) in no way alters the intent of the original ordinance, which is to maintain low density population in residential neighborhoods, to maintain single-household units, and to maintain a non-discriminatory policy of equal opportunity to all residential neighborhoods in this city.

Our support of this amendment is based on our reading of the City Charter and its explicit protections of housing and accomodation rights regardless of marital status or sexual orientation, as well as all other minority statuses against which the Charter prohibits discrimination. The ordinance now in force appears to us to be in violation of the Charter. Because Mr. Amaya reaised a civil rights issue in his original petition, we also believe that the Council should seek a recommendation from both the Law Department and the Human Rights Commission, as well as the Planning Commission. We, therefore, request that the Council seek such additional recommendations.

To sustain the current ordinance, to us, seems not only to be in violation of the Charter, but on a day-to-day pragmatic level, it seems to sustain a situation in which thousands of people now live in de facto violation of the ordinance, thereby maintaining one of those confusing victimless crime categories but on a scale too extensive to enforce, should anyone ever decide that enforcement were desirable. What enforcement does take place, and we are not aware of any systematic enforcement, is both selective and of a harrassment nature.

As concerns the proposed amendemnt in section (b), we have no opinion, except that in many cases it too would make legal situations which are currently de facto in technical violation of the law, but which are too extensive to be enfored realistically.

Thank you for your attention and concern in hearing our oppinions on these matters.

Statement submitted by
Linda Malatesta
for the Detroit Committee of MOHR
23 May 1978