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Assembly
California Legislature

RODERICK D. WRIGHT
ASSEMBLYMAN, FORTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT



CHAIR:
UTILITIES AND COMMERCE
SELECT COMMITTEE
ON EXPOSITION PARK

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4:
STATE ADMINISTRATION
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CALIFORNIA WINE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING
INDUSTRY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
RURAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET
COMMITTEE
JOINT TASK FORCE ON
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

January 14, 2002

Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisor Burke:

As a California Assemblyman representing the Los Angeles area, I want to offer my support for a Commission for Men in Los Angeles County.

Without regret, I have spent many years supporting laws that protect minorities and women in California. At the same time, a number of my male and female constituents would also like to see more attention to issues that affect men, including prostate and testicular cancer, divorce, prison conditions, domestic violence, and more.

Because men are often reluctant to discuss the issues that affect them, there is a lack of awareness about these issues even among male elected officials. Lately I have noticed increasing awareness about the need to address these issues and to bring men into the forum on gender.

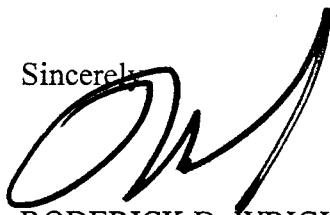
For example, the American Association of Blood Banks reported that almost 30 percent of more than 280,000 DNA tests in 1999 excluded the tested individual as the father. In response to the request of many of my constituents, I am now drafting the Paternity Justice Act of 2001 to prevent the fraudulent misidentification of a man as the father of another man's child ("paternity fraud"). As I draft the legislation, I have often felt that it would also be helpful to have a Commission for Men that raised awareness about this problem and helped men deal with it.

It has come to my attention that a public interest mental health attorney named Marc Angelucci, who helped me draft the Paternity Justice Act, is working to build support for a Commission for Men in Los Angeles County. As you may know, some very respectable groups have endorsed this idea, including the National Black Men's Health Network, the Men's Health Network, Stop Abuse For Everyone (SAFE), My Child Says Daddy, and others. I would like to join the list of endorsers.

Men, regardless of their race, are disproportionately dropping out of school, living on the streets, committing crimes, and dying early due to suicide, homicide, substance abuse, job-related casualties and poor health. A Commission for Men could help curb these problems by improving men's well-being in ways that are positive and beneficial not only to men and their loved ones but to all of society. For example, by helping men feel comfortable seeking treatment for mental illness before it turns into psychological crisis, the Commission can reduce violence and crime while lowering the homeless and prison populations.

Given how severely these issues affect our communities, promoting men's well-being seems not just helpful, but critical. I know of no better place to start than in Los Angeles. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roderick D. Wright', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

RODERICK D. WRIGHT
Assemblyman, 48th District

Cc: Marc Angelucci, Esq., Stop Abuse For Everyone ✓