

# City and County of San Francisco



Willie Lewis Brown, Jr.  
Mayor

# Human Rights Commission

Contract Compliance  
Dispute Resolution/Fair Housing  
Minority/Women/Local Business Enterprise  
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & HIV Discrimination

Marivic S. Bamba  
Executive Director

March 23, 1998

John Taylor, Clerk of the Board  
Board of Supervisors  
401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 308  
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Concerns of Exotic Dancers' Alliance

Dear Mr. Taylor:

The Human Rights Commission is writing this letter to express concern about the current alleged discriminatory treatment of workers throughout San Francisco Adult Entertainment Theaters and the alleged lack of adequate enforcement on behalf of government agencies within the City and County of San Francisco in response to reports of intolerable working conditions for exotic dancers.

According to members of the Exotic Dancers' Alliance (E.D.A.), the owners and management of San Francisco Adult Entertainment Theaters are violating labor laws by not paying their dancers wages; requiring the payments of illegal "stage fees," "quotas," "commissions" and "rent"; violating occupational standards and public health and safety laws by building private booths and back rooms without appropriate permits in order to facilitate coerced prostitution; and violating criminal laws by coercing and encouraging the dancers to prostitute themselves in the private booths and hand over their money in the form of the aforementioned illegal "stage fees" and "quotas." These alleged violations may exhibit systematic acts of discrimination and violence against sex industry workers (the majority of whom are female) which, if true, should not be tolerated within the City and County of San Francisco.

Also, according to E.D.A. members, local law enforcement agencies have not taken any formal action against management of these businesses for violating the rights of their workers. Exotic dancers deserve equal protection and treatment, and should not be subject to such intolerable working conditions. The City and County of San Francisco and respective government agencies including the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, San Francisco District Attorney's Office, San Francisco Fire Department, San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, CAL-OSHA, State of California Labor Commission, State of California Department of Fair Employment and Housing as well as the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have a responsibility to ensure that all dancers in the S.F. Adult Entertainment Theaters are being treated fairly and that managers are held accountable for any misconduct or violations of the law.

The Human Rights Commission has official jurisdiction over discrimination matters within the City and County of San Francisco, and is very concerned about the intolerable working conditions alleged by E.D.A. members at this time. The Human Rights Commission has reviewed the E.D.A.'s attached proposed Recommended Standards for Operation of Adult Entertainment Theaters in the City and County of San Francisco, and has made the enclosed formal recommendation that the Board of Supervisors establishes an inter-departmental task force to investigate the dancers' allegations. In addition, the Human Rights Commission would urge all respective government agencies and departments to take immediate action to ensure the ongoing protection and fair treatment of exotic dancers.

Sincerely,

Mercy Gharechedaghy  
Executive Secretary



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