

The Legislative Council: December 12, 2000
Summary of Discussion by Chung To, Chi Heng Foundation

Highlights:

Tongzhi wants equality, not special privileges.

Currently, “self regulation and education are the preferred approach” of the Government over legislation. However, legislative reform and public education are NOT mutually exclusive, and both are needed.

Concern over “reverse discrimination” is not valid. Those who “choose not to accept non-heterosexuality” should tolerate the existence of others, and cannot prevent others from having equal rights.

Justice and government’s responsibility to take care of minority groups should override “majority views”, which could sometimes be aimed to protect the majority’s interest at the expense of minority groups.

Many progressive countries and cities have explicit laws and regulations protecting the rights of people with different sexual orientations. As an international city, Hong Kong should follow.

What could be done:

Legal reform is needed in order to provide equal rights for tongzhi. In addition, there are many things that the executive branch of the Government could do.

EOB currently covers gender, family status and disability. Sexual orientation should be covered as well.

Even with an EOB, serious inequality still exists in the legal system: minimum age of consent; civil union/ marriage; spousal benefits; child adoption, etc.

More funding from HAB should be allocated to public education on equal opportunities and anti-discrimination against people based on sexual orientation.

Other issues: independent and comprehensive consultation; public housing; education curriculum; medical staff’s sensitivity; civil servants’ benefits.