

November 2, 1999

Manpower Panel
Legco
Hong Kong

Dear Sir/Madam

I understand that there will be a hearing on the subject of driving by Filipino Domestic Helpers. My parents are in their 80s and they do not drive. They depend on their Filipino domestic helper who, besides helping some of the heavier household chores, drive them around town. Because of their age, they need a driver who can live in to take them to get medical care in case of an emergency. We object to the banning of Domestic Servants from driving totally because:

- a) We are unable to find any driver in Hong Kong who is willing to live in.
- b) The objections from labour unions are that the Filipino Domestic Helpers' wages are lower and that they are taking the jobs from local drivers. There are no statistics that show there are enough drivers to replace all the domestic servants who do some driving. In fact, based on the recent spat of car accidents, many local drivers worked more than one shifts, partly because of pay, partly because of the lack of drivers. Therefore the solution, and one that the labour unions should be pushing, is to have a higher minimum wage scale for any domestic servant who does casual driving which will boost the pay of all drivers. It will reduce the need for the drivers to take on additional shifts and free up more jobs as well.
- c) Part of the attraction for high skill personnel to live in Hong Kong is Hong Kong's way of life which includes the ability to get domestic helpers and drivers.

This change in the rules is ill thought out with no alternate solution for the real problems which have to do more with the cost of living versus the wage scale. It will aggravate the problem of the overworking drivers. Strategically, it is shortsighted in that it is in the interest of the workforce in Hong Kong to move forward to a higher skill level.

Yours truly

CHANG Ur Way Lowell Godwin

CC: Dr C H Leong
Sophie Leung
Christine Loh
James Tien
Ken Ting