

## **Don't Believe Casciato's Malarkey!**

### **Setting the Record *Straight* about Domestic Partners:**

I have never opposed domestic partnership. In the ballot argument 22 years ago (!), I stated that anyone could have been designated as a pension continuant with the same benefits as married couples. My position was based solely on the lack of separation/divorce provisions in the legislation. That is no longer an issue. My support of domestic partnership continues as strongly as ever.

All the best, Herb Meiberger, CFA

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### Text of Proposed Charter Amendment – Proposition H -- 1994 8.500-2 Domestic Partner Benefits

As used in Charter sections 8.428, 8.509, 8.559, 8.485, 8.585, 8.586 and 8.588, 'surviving wife' shall also mean and include a 'surviving spouse'. As used in these sections, the phrase 'surviving wife' and 'surviving spouse' shall also mean and include a domestic partner, provided that:

- (a) there is no surviving spouse, and
- (b) the member has a designated his or her domestic partner as beneficiary with the Retirement System, and
- (c) the domestic partnership was established according to those provisions of Chapter 62 of the SF Administrative Code which require the filing of a signed Declaration of Domestic Partnership with the County Clerk.

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Herb Meiberger, Ballot Argument:

The city now gives free lifetime pensions to spouses when a retired employee dies. This is a costly benefit provided by practically no other pension plan in the country.

This Charter Amendment would extend the same costly benefit to domestic partners of City employees.

But the proposal has a very serious flaw: Every unmarried employee could sign up a domestic partner for this free pension. It wouldn't cost the employee a dime and it would be a very valuable lifetime benefit – which would be paid for by taxpayers.

If only 15% of those eligible to sign up a domestic partner did so, then the cost of the proposal would be over \$37 million. But if everyone eligible signed up a domestic partner, then the cost would escalate above \$260 million. There are no safeguards to prevent this from happening. The Declaration of Domestic Partnership has very broad language and has loose requirements on living together and sharing expenses.

The equity argument is misapplied here.

A city employee may now designate anyone to receive a pension continuation, which provides for domestic partners.

Only a small number of City employees are same sex domestic partners who cannot get married. So why give free pensions to this small group at the risk of giving free pensions to everyone?

This is a defective proposal. It may be well-meaning, but it may also be another costly giveaway.