

10/9/08

Letter re: Manchester Grand Hyatt by
Robert Harrison, Chair OHS section of APHA

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past several weeks, the APHA OHS Section leadership has been discussing how to recognize the boycott of the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel that has been called by the San Diego Central Labor Council. The Unite Here Local 30 in San Diego has joined in a broad coalition opposed to Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment on the statewide November ballot that would ban same-sex marriage. The owner of the Manchester Grand Hyatt has donated \$125,000 in support of Proposition 8, and APHA has been urged to withdraw patronage from the hotel (e.g., do not eat, meet or sleep at the Manchester Grand Hyatt).

The APHA Executive Board decided there would be no action by APHA to withdraw from the Manchester Grand Hyatt, and sent an email to all members explaining the rationale. In particular, the financial impact to APHA of withdrawal at this late date would be significant and several logistical hurdles would need to be overcome to find other meeting rooms and notify participants.

Although the OHS Section does not have any meetings scheduled in the Manchester Grand Hyatt, we may need to attend other sessions and meetings at this hotel. There may be a visible presence outside the Manchester Grand Hyatt urging a boycott of the hotel. Many of our Section members have expressed their commitment to not cross a picket or boycott line, and/or to support our colleagues in the labor movement in their coalition with the LGBT community. Although the choice to enter the Manchester Grand Hyatt is ultimately each of ours to make, a boycott of the Manchester Grand Hyatt is certainly consistent with longstanding principles and positions of APHA and OHS Section.

Some of you may be staying at the Manchester Grand Hyatt and may want to change hotels. If you are staying at the Manchester Grand Hyatt and would like to change your hotel room, you may contact the APHA Housing Bureau (<http://www.apha.org/meetings/housing/>) for assistance. Please know that rooms are very tight in San Diego and the APHA block is almost completely full. The housing bureau closes after October 9 and then will only accept

cancellations. You may also contact the San Diego Hotel and Convention Bureau directly (see <http://www.sandiego.org/nav/Visitors/WhereToStay>). Or call individual hotels.

Finally, many of you from outside of California may not be familiar with Proposition 8 and the importance of this California initiative on the front lines of the battle over gay marriage nationally. As you head to San Diego for the annual APHA meeting, you might want to learn more about the issues involved. Here are links to the official California ballot guide and well as three recent news stories:

California Secretary of State Official Voter Information Guide

<http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/title-sum/prop8-title-sum.htm>

Wall Street Journal August 27, 2008

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121979337416974603.html?mod=googlenews_wj

San Francisco Chronicle October 6, 2008

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/10/06/MNHB1388I5.DTL>

San Diego Union-Tribune October 7, 2008

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/politics/20081007-9999-1n7prop8.html>

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Occupational Health and Safety Section