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Title: COUNCIL WATCH Extended benefits get tentative pass

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COUNCIL WATCH

Extended benefits get tentative pass

The council gave a tentative thumbs up Wednesday to a proposal that requires city contractors to extend **equal benefits** to employees' spouses and domestic partners starting in 2007.

Background

The plan, pushed by Commissioner Sam Adams, would not require companies that offer no benefits to extend them to domestic partners or spouses. But it would require contractors who offer benefits to employees' spouses to offer **equal benefits** to their same-sex or opposite-sex domestic partners.

The plan did have a wrinkle because some health care providers don't offer domestic-partner coverage for companies smaller than 50 employees. Adams' staff said Oregon's eight major providers will offer the benefits for small businesses starting next year.

The change would apply to about 280 city contracts annually. Companies that can't add domestic partner benefits before next year will have a grace period.

The council had a first review of the proposal Wednesday. It moves to a final vote April 19. Portland would become the first city in Oregon and the 13th government body in the United States to approve such a rule.

Quotable

"I want to end the second-class treatment of some families headed by unmarried domestic partners and those domestic partners that cannot get married. "

Commissioner Sam Adams

Ryan Frank

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