



October 28, 1987

[REDACTED]

City of Chicago
Harold Washington, Mayor

Case Number 87096.A

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

The Board of Ethics has reviewed your request for an advisory opinion to determine (1) whether an alderman can hire his sister-in-law for his personal staff without violating the Ethics Ordinance, and (2) whether there would be a violation of the Ethics Ordinance if one alderman's sister-in-law were hired by another alderman to work on his or her committee. The Board has determined that the Ethics Ordinance would not prohibit the hiring of the alderman's sister-in-law in either of these situations.

Section 26.2-13 of the Ethics Ordinance places various restrictions upon the employment of relatives by City officials and employees. However, "relative" is defined in Section 26.2-1(s) of the Ordinance as:

"a person who is related to an official or employee as spouse or as any of the following: parent, child, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, grandparent, grandchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepfather or stepmother, stepson or stepdaughter, stepbrother or stepsister, half-brother or half-sister."

Sisters-in-law are not included in the Ordinance's definition of relative. Therefore, the provisions of the Ordinance restricting the employment of relatives do not apply to the sisters-in-law of City officials and employees.

On the other hand, if the person in question did fall within the Ordinance's definition of a "relative", she would still be eligible for employment on that alderman's personal staff since Section 26.2-13(a) contains an exemption from the prohibition against employment of relatives by City officials in the case of an alderman's personal



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staff. This exemption for aldermen's relatives, however, does not extend to City Council staff. Therefore, an alderman is prohibited by the Ordinance from (1) advocating the employment of a relative on the City Council staff; (2) employing a relative on his City Council staff; and (3) employing any person on either his City Council or personal staff in exchange for the employment of his or her relative.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Board of Ethics at 744-9660.

Sincerely,

S. Brandzel
S. Brandzel
Chairman

MA/jh, ██████████