



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0532, **Version:** 1

Resolution Recognizing Transgender Day of Visibility

Whereas, Ann Arbor is committed to fostering a diverse and welcoming community and ensuring that every individual is treated with dignity and respect, and protected from discrimination or harm;

Whereas, March 31 has been recognized annually as “Transgender Day of Visibility” since 2009 when Michigan transgender activist Rachel Crandall founded the observance to celebrate and honor the transgender community, as well as to raise awareness about the increased rates of discrimination and violence experienced by transgender individuals;

Whereas, Ann Arbor has benefitted greatly, both culturally and economically, from the many contributions made to our community by transgender and gender non-conforming individuals;

Whereas, Three years before Ann Arbor became the first city in the United States to officially recognize “Gay Pride” and forty years before the first “Transgender Day of Visibility” was celebrated, what we know as “Pride” today was born out of the 1969 Stonewall Riots in direct response to constant and targeted police harassment and violence against the LGBTQ community, but disproportionately against transgender people of color;

Whereas, Transgender and gender non-conforming people, but especially transgender women of color, continue to experience elevated levels of violence and discrimination;

Whereas, At least forty-four transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, mostly transgender women of color, were killed by violent means in 2020, making it the worst year on record for transphobic violence, and an additional eight individuals have already been killed in 2021;

Whereas, According to the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), one in five transgender people in the United States has been discriminated when seeking a home, more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes because of their gender identity, and one in five transgender individuals have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives as a result of family rejection, discrimination and violence;

Whereas, According to the NCTE, anti-transgender bias coupled with structural racism results in transgender people of color experiencing particularly devastating levels of discrimination, harassment and violence, with Black transgender individuals experiencing the highest levels of unemployment, homelessness, extreme poverty and health disparities;

Whereas, According to a national NCTE survey, half of transgender people report they are uncomfortable seeking police assistance, 22% of transgender people who interacted with police reported police harassment, and 6% of transgender individuals reported that they experienced bias-

motivated assault by officers, while Black transgender people reported much higher rates of biased harassment and assault (38% and 15%);

Whereas, According to the NCTE, transgender people who have done sex work or participated in underground economies often report elevated levels of police violence-this includes 16% of all trans people, 34% of Latinx trans people, and 53% of Black trans people;

Whereas, Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act still does not explicitly protect residents from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity;

Whereas, In the absence of state action by Michigan's legislature, over forty Michigan communities, including Ann Arbor, have enacted local, comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinances;

Whereas, Discrimination impedes local efforts to attract and retain talented, hardworking, determined and highly-skilled people to our community, and by extension hinders the economic and cultural growth and prosperity of our city, region and state; and

Whereas, Transgender and gender non-conforming people, especially people of color, are more likely to be fired or denied a job, face harassment and bullying at school, become homeless or live in extreme poverty, be evicted or denied housing or access to shelter, be denied access to critical medical care, and face greater risk of violence;

RESOLVED, That in recognition of "Transgender Day of Visibility" which takes place annually on March 31 and in solidarity with and support of transgender people across the United States, Ann Arbor shall continue to fly the transgender pride flag at Larcom City Hall annually on March 31;

RESOLVED, That while increased visibility and awareness of inequity and injustice is important to overcoming it, City Council also directs the City Administrator to ensure that all operations of the city are centered in the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice;

RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator, on an ongoing basis, to evaluate our non-discrimination laws and policies for necessary enhancements, and by June 1, 2021, in coordination with the Human Rights Commission, to evaluate the current processes for reporting under and enforcement of the city's Non-Discrimination Ordinance to identify trends, evaluate the efficacy of enforcement measures, and determine if changes to the process, including but not limited to staff intake of complaints via telephone and allowing for anonymous complaints to be filed, should be implemented;

RESOLVED, That City Council commits to developing additional local solutions to help overcome ongoing injustices disproportionately impacting the transgender community, especially transgender women of color, prioritizing solutions in housing, law enforcement, criminal justice, so-called conversion therapy, sexual abuse and violence, and ongoing discrimination of all kinds;

RESOLVED, That City Council reaffirms our support for state-wide legal protection from discrimination for LGBTQ individuals by amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include

“sexual orientation” and “gender identity or expression” as protected classes; and

RESOLVED, That City Council reaffirms its commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable and welcoming community which ensures that every individual is treated with dignity and respect, and is granted equal protection from discrimination and harm.

Sponsored by: Councilmember Radina and Mayor Taylor and Councilmembers Griswold, Song, Disch, Nelson, Eyer and Briggs