

Support Human Rights in Leon County!

Urge the Leon County Commission to expand anti-discrimination protections to ALL of Leon County's residents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity

The Leon County Commission is currently reviewing a proposal that will expand the County's existing anti-discrimination code to include protections for the LGBT community. There is broad support for measures that protect ALL of Leon County's residents from employment- and housing-related discrimination. Many cities and counties across Florida already provide these protections for their LGBT residents, and we believe it's time for Leon County to do the same.

What does the Human Rights proposal consist of?

The proposal being considered by the Leon County Commissioners consists of:

1. Amending the existing Fair Housing Code (Human Rights - Chapter 9) to add gender identity or expression to sexual orientation (which already exists in the code);
2. Providing protection against employment discrimination for the LGBT Community with public and private employers, which would provide a private cause of action; and

Why this is needed:

Unlike many municipalities and counties throughout Florida (most recently Gulfport & Dunedin), the LGBT Community has no legal recourse for discrimination in Leon County. Unlike other types of discrimination, LGBT discrimination cases do not have an available means of legal redress. There are no state or federal protections. A case can only proceed if there is a city or county ordinance prohibiting LGBT discrimination. That is why we need to add these protections to the County Code, thereby ensuring protection for all of the citizens of Leon County.

National and local studies suggest discrimination against the LGBT community is a problem in Leon County and across Florida. A survey of LGBT residents released last fall by Petra Doan, Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University, found that 46 percent experienced verbal harassment; 18 percent experienced discrimination in housing and employment; and 13 percent experienced physical harassment, including violence.

Last year, a Soul of the Community survey conducted by the Knight Foundation and the Gallup organization found that only 12 percent of the community at large felt strongly that Tallahassee is a welcoming place for gays and lesbians. This represents a further drop from the previous year, where only 17 percent of the respondents found this to be a welcoming place for gays and lesbians. The study concluded that the community needs to work on being more open, as gays and lesbians are perceived to be the least welcomed group.

The Williams Institute, a think tank at the UCLA School of Law documented in 2009 more than 380 cases of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity by state and local employers.

What the Human Rights proposal does NOT do:

- The proposal does NOT have any fiscal impact for our county government.

- The proposal does NOT give the County the ability to prosecute or hear cases, or to issue penalties of any kind. The newly created Human Relations advisory board would continue to serve the County in an advisory capacity ONLY.

What are the benefits for Leon County in adopting these changes?

- Will protect ALL of Leon County's residents from employment- and housing-related discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Helps stem the "brain drain" of FSU and FAMU graduates. Studies show that open, tolerant communities are viewed most favorably by young professionals when they consider places to live and work after graduation.
- Creates a positive image for the Tallahassee-Leon County area that will attract more high quality businesses.
- Provide an open, welcoming community for everyone.
- Allow each individual to be the best that they can be without bias or discrimination.

How you can help:

Contact the Leon County Commission at (850) 606-5302 and urge the Commission to support the expansion of Human Rights.

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SHOW UP MARCH 23RD TO THE LEON COUNTY COMMISSION CHAMBERS AS THIS IMPORTANT MEASURE COMES BEFORE THE COMMISSION.

<http://leonhro.familytreecenter.org/index.html>