

Hall, Renee

From: Chunhui Chen <cchen23@iastate.edu>
Sent: Thursday, January 2, 2025 2:10 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Cc: Eames, Casandra; Chunhui Chen
Subject: Ames City resolution request by Terry Lowman
Attachments: Terry Lowman Resolution.pdf; Terry Lowman Email.pdf; AHRC Response to Terry Lowman.pdf

[External Email]

Dear Mayor and City Council members,

Recently the Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC) received a formal request from Terry Lowman on behalf of the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa to adopt a resolution "All Are Welcome in [city/county]". Upon a close examination of the proposed resolution, and consultation with the City attorney, the AHRC unanimously voted to forward the resolution to the Ames City council for consideration, as it holds the legislative authority to determine whether or not to adopt it.

Attached are copies of the original email from Terry, the draft of the resolution, and the AHRC email response to Terry.

Best regards,

Chunhui Chen
on behalf of the Ames Human Relations Commission

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Chunhui Chen
Email: cchen23@gmail.com

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From: Terry Lowman <terryleelowman@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 8, 2024 6:22 PM
To: Human Relations Commission
Subject: All are welcome in Iowa

[External Email]

Good evening,

This last year a bill was passed to give people's religious beliefs power to override human rights. Interfaith Alliance of Iowa is working to affirm dignity and respect for all people in Iowa and we believe that our government has a duty to stand in the way of bigotry.

Here's Interfaith Alliance's [webpage](#) explaining why this is important. Please see the [resolution](#) for local governments to sign saying that equal rights under the law and liberty for all is foundational to our nation and government.

We're just beginning this process and would like to have your endorsement for this before we ask the city council to consider it. I did send a beta version of the resolution and we've revised it to include feedback from our elected officials.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Warmly,

Terry Lowman
515-441-9844

All Are Welcome in Iowa

Resolution Declaring All Are Welcome in [City/County]

Whereas, equal rights under the law and liberty for all is foundational to our nation and government; and

Whereas, the Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all [people] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”; and

Whereas, the Iowa state motto states, “Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain”; and

Whereas, the Iowa Civil Rights Act passed in 1965 and amended in 2007 includes employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and credit considerations as areas of life that cannot be used for discrimination based on a person's color, creed, gender identity, marital status, national origin, disability, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation; and

Whereas, many Iowans are experiencing anger and fear due to several laws passed in Iowa in 2023 and 2024, including the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which codifies religious exemptions allowing individuals to use religious beliefs as legal justification to discriminate against other Iowans who are then deprived of their rights and liberties; and

Whereas, discrimination and inequality erode the founding principles of our society and government; and

Whereas, equal rights under the law and liberty for all require that anti-discrimination protections be considered a compelling government interest and the least restrictive means of achieving that interest. A religious liberty claim should not be elevated above or overrule by law other equally important rights and liberties; and

Whereas, no person should be allowed to use religion, religious freedom, or any other reason as justification to discriminate against another person based on color, creed, gender identity, marital status, national origin, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, reproductive status, violence survivor status; and

Whereas, Iowans are leaving our communities and the state due to the dangers of RFRA and other laws passed by Iowa lawmakers that send a message contrary to our state's motto and the promise that *All Are Welcome in Iowa*; and

Whereas, these laws, including RFRA, harm the reputation of our state and the best interests of its business community as well as cities and counties large and small, urban and rural; and

Whereas, [City/County] aims to create a community where discrimination has no place. It also recognizes ensuring complete safety or freedom from discrimination is a complex, ongoing effort and collaboration among individuals, organizations, and government.

Therefore, be it resolved, [City/County] is committed to promoting a united vision where *All Are Welcome in [City/County]* and further commits [City/County] to being a *discrimination-free community*. We recognize our responsibility to foster a community that actively works towards inclusivity, equity, and the protection of rights for all, even as we acknowledge the ongoing nature of this work.

Be it further resolved, [City/County] encourages businesses, housing developments and landlords, non-profit organizations, houses of worship, educational institutions, and neighborhood associations to unite in the message *All Are Welcome in [City/County name]* and declare themselves as a *discrimination-free partner*.

Be it further resolved, [City/County] declares it will only enforce the Iowa Religious Freedom Restoration Act in ways that treat all federal, state, and local anti-discrimination protections as a compelling government interest. [City/County] will apply equal protection to those who reside in or visit [City/County] so all may be free from discrimination in our community and in the great state of Iowa.



Chunhui Chen <cchen23@gmail.com>

Resolution Declaring All Are Welcome in [City/County]2 messages

Chunhui Chen <cchen23@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 9:29 AM

To: Terry Lowman <terryleelowman@gmail.com>

Cc: "Eames, Casandra" <cassandra.eames@cityofames.org>, Chunhui Chen <cchen23@gmail.com>

Dear Terry,

On behalf of the Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC), thank you for your commitment to advocating for dignity and respect for all individuals in Iowa. We deeply appreciate your efforts and the thoughtful work you put into drafting the Resolution Declaring All Are Welcome in [City/County].

After careful review and discussion, the AHRC members unanimously voted to forward your resolution to the Ames City Council for consideration. As the body holding legislative authority, the City Council will determine whether to adopt the resolution.

Thank you again for your dedication to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community.

Sincerely,

Chunhui Chen
Chair, Ames Human Relations Commission

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Chunhui Chen
Email: cchen23@gmail.com

Terry Lowman <terryleelowman@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 9:45 AM

To: Chunhui Chen <cchen23@gmail.com>

Thank you for the update. These are times that will try those of us who believe that everyone has value and needs respect.

Terry
[Quoted text hidden]