



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 18, 2016

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

Ken Gunn, Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR)

312.744.1545

Kenneth.gunn@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL INTRODUCES MEASURE TO PROTECT RESIDENTS FROM DISCRIMINATION

*Proposal Would Prohibit Public Places from Denying Access to Facilities
on the Basis of Gender Identity*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and members of the LGBT caucus today introduced a measure that would strengthen the protections offered under the Human Rights Ordinance and align it with new guidelines recently enacted by Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

"The City of Chicago celebrates diversity and has a long and proud history of being a welcoming place for LGBT residents," said Mayor Emanuel. "Despite measures being enacted in other states, we as a country should be adding more protections – not taking them away – to prevent discrimination, which is why we're proposing this additional measure to protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals from discrimination in Chicago."

The ordinance would prohibit public accommodations like hotels, restaurants or grocery stores from requiring patrons to show a government issued ID upon request to access its facilities that are private in nature such as restrooms based on a person's biological category, his or her gender identity, or both.

"Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated in Chicago," said Alderman Tom Tunney. "This measure further underscores the fact that Chicago welcomes all people, regardless of their biological category and/or their gender identity."

"The North Carolina law is unconscionable and an extreme overreach, and I'm pleased that Chicago is taking the opposite approach in an effort to protect all of our residents from discrimination," said Alderman Pat Dowell.

"Transgender people shouldn't be subjected to ridiculous restrictions on bathroom usage," said James Cappleman. "This measure protects this community from discriminatory practices like those wrongly embraced by states like North Carolina."

“This change will ensure that the Human Rights Ordinance’s public accommodation protections of equal access will apply equally to all people as originally intended,” said Mona Noriega, Chair and Commissioner of the Commission on Human Relations. “As the agency that enforces the ordinance, we applaud the Mayor for taking this corrective action. The law was enacted by the City to protect people from discrimination, not be a tool for discrimination.”

This is just the latest action taken by the Mayor to combat discrimination against LGBT and transgender individuals. Last month, in response to a new North Carolina law that prohibits local governments from passing laws to protect members of the LGBT community, Mayor Emanuel directed City department heads to cease any City-funded or other travel by an employee representing the City of Chicago to the State of North Carolina. Departments shall not authorize any employee travel that is not absolutely necessary for the enforcement of Chicago law, meets prior contractual obligations, or is for the protection of public health, welfare and safety.

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