



Memo RE: Welcoming Declaration

Since last September, a group of concerned community members has been in contact with the Human Rights Commission to discuss the possibility of the City of Columbia passing a Welcoming Declaration. Members of that group attended Human Rights Commission meetings as well as a Citizens Police Review Board meeting. Feedback was sought, and given, as to ways that Columbia could become a more welcoming city as well as what a welcoming declaration may look like for our community, including earlier versions of the attached draft. One direct result of that discussion was the request to Council that funds be appropriated for Columbia to re-join the Welcoming America program; a request that was approved.

At the Human Rights Commission's March meeting, a draft Welcoming Declaration (attached) was presented to the Commission for discussion. The draft Welcoming Declaration was created by community members rather than the Human Rights Commission. The Commission unanimously approved that, on behalf of those community members who brought their concerns to us, the draft declaration be forwarded to Council along with this memo. We realize any approval of a declaration would require the review of the law department, and offer this merely as a template as to some of the concerns shared by community members. We ask only that the Council consider drafting a welcoming declaration as Councilmembers and the Mayor see fit.

The Human Rights Commission thanks you for your consideration in this matter.

Scott Dean
Chair, Human Rights Commission

Columbia Missouri Declaration as a Welcoming City

In light of escalating xenophobic and racist rhetoric and attacks on the human rights of refugee and immigrant populations, the City of Columbia issues the following declaration of welcome and solidarity with the diverse individuals and communities calling Columbia their home.

- We believe in and stand for inclusion, equality and justice. We condemn racism, sexism, religious intolerance, xenophobia, and homophobia in rhetoric and action.
- We affirm that Columbia will not initiate or promote the registration of individuals based on religious affiliation or national origin. Nor will Columbia residents be subject to unnecessary restraints or any type of racial profiling.
- We stand in opposition to actions that restrict city services and programs to certain individuals based on sex, economic status, race, religion, national origin or immigration status, ancestry, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- We recognize that equality and inclusion are fundamental to Columbia, its communities and institutions. Equal protection under the law must be fully accessible to all individuals. All among us have the right to live in dignity, without fear of discrimination, bias or harassment.