

17 March 2019

To: Mayor Ron Nirenberg  
City of San Antonio  
115 Plaza de Armas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
San Antonio, TX 78205

Re: Texas SB 15

Mayor Nirenberg:

The 2019 Texas Legislature is currently considering Senate Bill 15, which would prohibit specific local regulation of private employers. The original text of this proposed legislation included language that would have protected municipal Non-Discrimination Ordinances. However, lawmakers stripped that language before it passed out of the Senate State Affairs committee.

During the past week, the members of the LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee have discussed the effects that Senate Bill 15 could have on the quality of life in San Antonio. We recommend that the City change its current neutrality towards the bill and register opposition to the proposed law.

The current language of SB 15 would prevent San Antonio from expanding our Non-Discrimination Ordinance to cover private-sector employers. Currently, neither federal nor state law prohibits discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Our community intends that San Antonio will follow Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, and El Paso and make our NDO applicable to private employers. As we are one of the fastest growing cities and house the largest number of LGBTQIA families, this move is necessary to sustain San Antonio's success. SB 15 would leave our citizens unprotected at the hands of the city, as it would prevent expanding the NDO and allow discrimination regarding private-sector leave and employee benefits.

Although the City Attorney believes that SB 15 does not affect our existing NDO, which covers municipal employees, other legal experts argue that it could negatively impact our ordinance as it relates to city contractors. This change alone would represent a significant setback for the LGBTQ+ community and chip away at the limited protections we currently have in San Antonio.


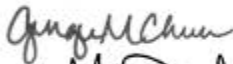
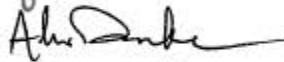
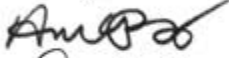
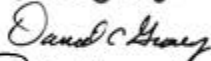
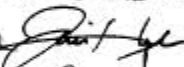
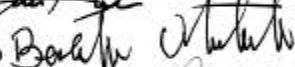
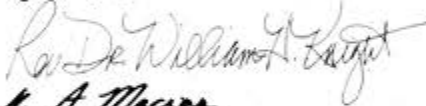
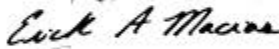


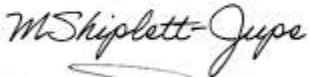

Legal teams at the American Civil Liberties Union, Equality Texas, and Human Rights Campaign state that the language in SB 15 would compromise the Non-Discrimination Ordinances in many major Texas cities, such as those in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, and Plano. Anti-LGBTQ leaders such as Rev. Dave Welch, founder of the Houston-based U.S. Pastor Council, have praised the change to SB 15 as "an avenue to curb how cities are able to dictate employment protections for LGBTQ people." San Antonio should not be neutral about preserving human rights in other Texas cities. Although our NDO is currently more limited in scope, our city must show solidarity on the issue and oppose the pending legislation.

The House version of the bill, HB 1654, preserves the NDO protections. However, our committee suggests that the City Council advocate for ordinances it has passed and which the community

struggled to obtain. San Antonio City Council passed our NDO and Paid Sick Leave Ordinances after years of advocacy, hard work by citizens, and a coalition of civil rights groups — including LGBTQ+ organizations. We need to keep these significant achievements intact, and not forfeit our municipal authority to lawmakers in Austin.

Gratefully yours,

Members of the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee:

Ashley Smith   
Rev. Naomi Brown  
Ginger Chun   
Alexander Darke   
Anel Flores   
Daniel Graney   
Jamie Hash   
Barbie Hurtado   
Rev. Dr. William H. Knight   
Erick LaRue Macias   
Chad Reumann   
Maria Salazar   
Melissa Shiplett-Jupe   
David Solis 

c.c. Roberto Treviño, Art Hall, Rebecca Viagran, Rey Saldaña, Shirley Gonzales, Greg Brockhouse, Ana Sandoval, Manny Pelaez, John Courage, Clayton Perry