RESOLUTION NO. 2016 -0001

A resolution expressing support for the recent rules adopted by the Washington State Human Rights Commission related to nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and expressing opposition to the alteration or repeal of these rules.

WHEREAS, In 2006, the Washington State Legislature amended the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD, Chapter 49.60 of the Revised Code of Washington) to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes under the law; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Human Rights Commission is the agency that administers and enforces the law, and is tasked with creating rules that provide clarity on how the law should be interpreted; and

WHEREAS, this has been the duty of the Washington State Human Rights Commission since it was first established in 1949; and

WHEREAS, the Commission underwent an extensive public process starting in 2012 to draft the rules regarding the 2006 amendment of the WLAD contained in Chapter 162-32 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) that included public workshops and forums; and

WHEREAS, in recent weeks several bills have been proposed in the state legislature that aim to repeal or alter a portion of these rules based on a misunderstanding of what these rules do and a lack of knowledge or awareness about the transgender community; and

WHEREAS, the rules merely clarify a law that has been on the books for ten years in the State of Washington; and

WHEREAS, the rules are necessary to address unequal treatment and discrimination that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and in particular transgender community, faces in many walks of life; and

WHEREAS, a nationwide study of transgender people in 2011 (“Injustice at Every Turn”) found that 44% experienced denial of service or equal treatment in public accommodations and 53% experienced harassment in a place of public accommodation; and
WHEREAS, the rules protect the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) citizens of the State of Washington from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations; and

WHEREAS, laws and rules such as the ones noted above have been adopted in 17 states and over 200 cities (the oldest of which is Minneapolis, MN which adopted a law protecting transgender people in 1975) across the country without increases in harassment or abuse as a result; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Spokane Human Rights Commission expresses support for the rules adopted and published by the Washington State Human Rights Commission in WAC 162-32.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Spokane Human Rights Commission strongly opposes any attempts to repeal or alter these rules, including House Bill 2589, House Bill 2589, Senate Bill 6548, and Senate Bill 6443, as they represent attacks against the civil rights of citizens of the City of Spokane.

ADOPTED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON JANUARY 26, 2016.

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