

Open Letter to the Houston City Council

From Houston Religious Leaders

As spiritual leaders from a variety of faith traditions in the city of Houston, we write to ask you to support passage of an Equal Rights Ordinance for our city. We stand against any discrimination based on an individual's sex, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, familial status, marital status, military status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or pregnancy.

The moral fabric of our society is shaped not only by our private spiritual practices, but also by the values embodied in our laws as a community. While we have responsibility for the spiritual development of individuals and families in our religious communities, your decisions articulate our city's values in our laws.

We come from many religious traditions and hold different texts and observances as sacred, yet we share a commitment to the dignity of every human being, which requires treating each member of our community fairly, equally and with respect. The Equal Rights Ordinance seeks to extend these values to all the citizens of the city without imposing one set of religious beliefs over those of others.

We recognize that there are honest differences on these issues within and among the religious communities of Houston. These are issues for people of faith to reconcile within our faith communities.

We believe the best way you can honor those differences is by reaffirming the strong American commitment to the principle of religious liberty for all. This ordinance acknowledges that fundamental freedom by protecting Houstonians from discrimination AND preserving the religious liberty of congregations and religious organizations to believe and practice as they feel led.

We appreciate your consideration of our sincerely held beliefs and trust that you will exercise your conscience as you serve the citizens of Houston. We will hold each of you in our prayers.

Signed,
70 Houston faith leaders
(See reverse for individual signees)

Affiliations provided for identification purposes only.

Rev. Betty Adam, Episcopal	Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church	Rev. Lisa Hunt, Episcopal	Rabbi David Rosen, Congregation Beth Yeshurun
Rev. Douglas Anders, United Church of Christ	Dr. Millard Eiland, Alliance of Baptists	Dr. Todd Jordan, United Methodist	Rev. Lynette Ross, Cathedral of Hope Houston UCC
Ann Arnett, United Methodist	Emily Everett, Methodist	Rev. Teddy Kissell, Bethel Church (UCC)	Rabbi Laura Sheinkopf, Congregation Jewish Community North
Rev. Hannah Atkins, Trinity Episcopal Church	Rev. Johnna Faber, Resurrection MCC	Rev. Anthony Lorenzen, Houston UU Fellowship (Wirt Road)	Rabbi Seth Stander, Congregation Beth El/Reform Judaism
Rev. Burton Bagby-Grose, United Church of Christ	Rev. Pat Farnan, Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church	Joseph Lozano, Dignity Houston	Rev. Don Storey, Sr, United Methodist
Rev. Carissa Baldwin-McGinnis, Episcopal	Rev. Andrea Ferguson, Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church	Rev. Blair Lundborg, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Rev. Alex Stroud, Universal Life Church
Rev. George Bement, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Rev. Bruce Frogge, Disciples of Christ	Rev. Paul Mathre, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Rev. Junfeng Tan, Faith Lutheran Church (Bellaire)
Rev. Glynden Bode, United Methodist	Rev. Bradley Fuerst, Houston Lutheran Campus Ministry/ELCA	Rev. Laura Mayo, Covenant Church	Rabbi Ranon Teller, Congregation Brith Shalom
DeAnna Bosch, Episcopal	Rev. Vickey Gibbs, MCC	Rev. Jim McGill, Episcopal	Rev. Barkley Thompson, Episcopal
Jeremy Bradley, Episcopal	Rev. Jerry Goree, Bering Memorial United Methodist	Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams, United Methodist	Rev. Troy Treash, Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church
Rev. Dr. Gary Brewton, Orthodox Catholic Church	Rev. James Grace, St. Andrew's Episcopal	Rev. Kerry Nelson, Faith Lutheran Church	Rev. Ernest Turney, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church
Rev. Ginny Brown Daniel, Plymouth United Church, UCC	Rev. Lura Groen, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church	Rev. Daniel O'Connell, First Unitarian Universalist	Rev. Bonnie Vegiard, First Unitarian Universalist Church
Rev. Susan Buchanan, United Methodist	Rabbi Steve Gross, Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism	Rev. David Pantermuehl, United Church of Christ	Rev. Sven Verbeet, Gateway of Hope Pentecostal Church
Katy Carpman, Unitarian Universalist	Rev. Freedom Gulley, Progressive Open Door Christian Center	Rev. Brandon Peete, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church	Rev. Emilee Whitehurst, Presbyterian
Rev. Catharine Cline, Grace United Church of Christ	Peggy Hahn, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Rev. Lloyd Porter, Episcopal	Rev. Rita Wilbur, United Church of Christ
Dr. Karon Cook, Universal Life Church	Rev. Helen Havens, Episcopal	Rev. Steve Quill, Living Word Lutheran Church	Rev. Francene Young, Espiscopal
Rev. Joanna Crawford, First Unitarian Universalist Church	Rev. Vicki Hopper, St. Peter UCC	Rev. Ken Richter, First Congregational Church	
Rev. Michael Diaz, Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church	Rev. Eric Hungerford, Episcopal	Rev. GiGi Rodriguez, Living Mosaic Montrose Church	