



## BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

### Human Rights Commission

#### Recommendation Number: 20230724-004: Safeguard Educational Freedoms

WHEREAS, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes education as a fundamental human right, enabling individuals to exercise their full potential and contribute to society; and

WHEREAS, the city of Austin's mission includes diversity and inclusion as core principles that are essential for the prosperity and well-being of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature recently passed a ban on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts in higher education institutions, hindering academic freedom and impeding the pursuit of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, DEI initiatives promote understanding, respect, and inclusivity among students, faculty, and staff, fostering an environment conducive to learning, critical thinking, and personal growth; and

WHEREAS, the ban on DEI efforts threatens Austin's educational anchors in their ability to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, thereby limiting their educational opportunities and impeding their personal and professional development; and

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council has a responsibility to uphold the principles of human rights, equality, and non-discrimination within its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial for the City Council to protect and advocate for the educational freedoms and opportunities of Austin residents, particularly in response to restrictive policies that impede the advancement of DEI in higher education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Human Rights Commission hereby urges the Austin City Council to take a strong and unequivocal stance against the Texas Legislature's ban on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts in higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Austin City Council is called upon to:

1. Express its support for the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education institutions within the city's jurisdiction;

2. Publicly voice its opposition to the ban on DEI efforts and highlight the detrimental impact such policies may have on the educational experiences and opportunities of Austin residents;
3. Explore legal avenues to challenge the ban on DEI efforts, advocating for its repeal or modification to safeguard the rights of Austin residents;
4. Encourage open dialogue, engagement, and education among residents, educators, policymakers, and community leaders to foster a better understanding of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education; and
5. Coordinate efforts with other cities, organizations, and individuals sharing a commitment to educational freedoms and human rights, amplifying the collective voice against any policies that impede DEI in higher education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Austin City Council, relevant state representatives and senators, local educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders, signifying the Human Rights Commission's dedication to protecting and promoting educational freedoms and opposing infringements on diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education.

Date of Approval: July 24, 2023

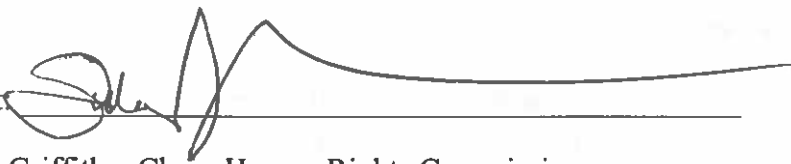
Record of the vote: 7 – 0

**FOR:** Chair I. Griffith, L. Garcia, M. Aslam, M. Davis, M. Kruger, K. Duhon, G. Zeidan

**ABSENT:** Vice Chair A. Weigel

**OFF DAIS:** M. Stevenson

Attest

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Idona Griffith', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Idona Griffith – Chair, Human Rights Commission