



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number 20240325-07: Addressing the difficulties confronted by immigrants and refugees through immigrant supportive policies.

WHEREAS, the United States is in critical need of comprehensive immigration reform that reflects the values of fairness, compassion, and respect for due process. The current immigration system is outdated, overly complex, and lacks sufficient pathways for legal immigration, leading to widespread inefficiencies and injustices in the treatment of immigrants and refugees seeking to contribute to American society.

WHEREAS, the robustness of the U.S. economy relies on the contributions of immigrant workers who fill vital roles in industries such as agriculture, hospitality, healthcare, and technology. Immigrants not only fill essential jobs that many American citizens are unwilling to undertake but also stimulate economic growth by establishing businesses, purchasing goods and services, and paying taxes, thereby enriching local communities and bolstering the national economy.

WHEREAS, recent years have witnessed a concerning rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, perpetuated by populist politicians who scapegoat immigrants for societal challenges and economic insecurities. In regions like Texas, which is home to a significant immigrant population, such divisive rhetoric has exacerbated tensions and fostered a climate of fear and hostility towards immigrant communities, undermining social cohesion and collective well-being.

WHEREAS, a substantial number of immigrants seeking refuge in the United States are asylum seekers fleeing dire circumstances in their home countries, including poverty, violence, political persecution, and environmental disasters. These individuals and families embark on perilous journeys in search of safety and opportunity, often facing additional hardships and trauma along the way.

WHEREAS, the city of Austin prides itself on its values of freedom, compassion, and inclusivity, recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals regardless of their immigration status. In the absence of meaningful immigration reforms and permanent protections for immigrant families at the federal level, community organizations play a vital role in providing essential services and support to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, ensuring their basic needs are met and their rights upheld.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Austin City Council, in partnership with the Human Rights Commission, is called on to reaffirm its commitment to supporting immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the local community by implementing the following measures:

- Enhanced Budgetary Allocations: The Austin City Council is called on to pledge to allocate

additional resources in the city budget to fund programs, initiatives, and services specifically tailored to meet the needs of immigrant populations, ensuring access to essential support and assistance.

- **Support for Local Nonprofits and Organizations:** The Austin City Council is urged to actively collaborate with local nonprofits and community-based organizations dedicated to safeguarding the rights and dignity of immigrants, refugees, and survivors of persecution, offering free immigration legal services, educational outreach, and advocacy efforts.
- **Promotion of Equity and Accessibility:** The Austin City Council is further urged to establish or bolster an office for immigrant affairs within the city government, tasked with facilitating immigrant integration through initiatives such as financial literacy programs, citizenship workshops, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and legal defense services for undocumented residents facing deportation risks.
- **Advocacy and Collaboration:** The City Council is urged to advocate for pro-immigrant federal policies and collaborate with national networks such as "Cities for Action", "American Gateways" and "GirlForward", to advance inclusive programs and policies at the local level. Additionally, the City Council reaffirms its commitment to public safety for all residents by refraining from using limited law enforcement resources to enforce federal immigration laws.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** The City Council is called to launch public awareness campaigns aimed at challenging stereotypes and misconceptions about immigration, highlighting the positive contributions of immigrants to economic development and cultural enrichment, and promoting the values of compassion, equity, and diversity that define Austin as a welcoming and inclusive city.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission urges the Austin City Council to recognize the urgent needs of the immigrant population in the absence of humane and effective state and federal policies, and to prioritize the allocation of resources and support mechanisms to address these pressing concerns.

Date of Approval: _____

Record of the vote:

Attest: _____