

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2009-1031

TITLE: Resolution in Opposition to Proposed Charter Amendment 1 on the March 24, 2009 Ballot

AUTHORS: Senators Ben Cavaturo and Mark McShera; Equality is Gainesville's Business Campus Coordinator Garrett Garner; Former Senator Eric Wolf

SPONSORS: Senators Ben Cavaturo, Mark McShera, Stacey Gray, Alden Gillespy, Jonathan Ossip, Alan Yanuck, Gary Benedix, Amy Pittman, Travis Baker, Dylan Billiodeaux, Jacob Fyda, Benjamin N. Dictor, John Foster and Jay Miller

WHEREAS, the City of Gainesville's human rights ordinance prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit extension services, protections based on sexual orientation have been in place since 1998, and protections based on gender identity have been in place for over a year; and

WHEREAS, there is a proposed amendment to the Gainesville City Charter on the ballot for the March 24, 2009 general city election that would prohibit the City of Gainesville from creating or enforcing anti-discrimination provisions beyond what is provided for in the Florida Civil Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, Gainesville City Commissioner Craig Lowe, the chair of Equality is Gainesville's Business, has stated that the proposed Charter Amendment would:

- Eliminate protections against discrimination and make it legal to fire someone from their job, kick them out of their home, or refuse them service at a hotel or restaurant because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
- Take away the city's power to protect its citizens from discrimination by prohibiting them from creating or enforcing anti-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, socio-economic status, or political affiliation.
- Surrender to state politicians in Tallahassee the sole power to dictate what they think is best for Gainesville residents regarding antidiscrimination laws.
- Ruin Gainesville's reputation as a community that is open and welcoming to anyone who comes here to work, learn, or visit. This will hinder the City's ability to attract new businesses, students, and visitors and hurt our economy.

WHEREAS, every member of the nonpartisan Gainesville City Commission -- Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan and Commissioners Thomas Hawkins, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Scherwin Henry, Lauren

Poe, Jack Donovan, and Craig Lowe -- as well as Alachua County Commissioner Paula DeLaney oppose the proposed amendment to the City Charter.

WHEREAS, the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce opposes the proposed charter amendment to the City Charter due to its potential to harm economic growth; and

WHEREAS, the North Central Florida Labor Council opposes the proposed charter amendment, because it would negatively affect the City's antidiscrimination laws by undoing basic protections that promote more fair, equitable, and productive workplaces and that recognize and embrace diversity and inclusion; then

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Student Senate of the University of Florida affirms the human dignity and civil rights of all persons to live in a community with protections against discrimination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Senate of the University of Florida opposes any effort to remove protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.