



San Diego Pride DevOUT Interfaith Program

DevOUT - Affirming Interfaith Letter re: Commissioner Hodges

June 3, 2022

Chair and Members of the San Diego County Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission:

The mission of the San Diego County Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission is to promote positive relations, respect, and the integrity of every individual regardless of gender, religion, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or citizenship status. The Commission brings together a diverse group of citizens who work together as Commissioners to foster a more inclusive and equitable San Diego County.

In November of 2021 and in consistent public communications since, Commissioner Hodges openly expressed views that are anathema to the mission and goals of the Commission - transphobic ideals that have absolutely no place on this Commission.

As LGBTQ-affirming faith leaders, we recognize and celebrate that LGBTQ and faith communities are not, in fact, in opposition. Indeed, nearly half of LGBTQ adults in the U.S. are religious, and LGBTQ adults deserve faith communities and faith leaders that are affirming and welcoming and allow LGBTQ people to be their fully authentic selves.

For example, both Jewish and Christian scriptures assert that humans are made in the image of God, something that we understand to include the fullness and diversity of humanity's gender and sexuality. Further, the affirmation of LGBTQ people, including the affirmation of transgender people, is a cornerstone of our service as faith leaders.

As faith leaders, we understand and have compassion for the struggle to reconcile the long history of anti-LGBTQ sentiments in faith communities with the understanding of what is right and just. We respect differences in faith and belief, however, assert that as faith leaders, we are called to recognize and affirm the dignity of all of our fellow humans.

That said, Commissioner Hodges is incompatible with service on a human relations commission whose mission is to "promote positive human relations, respect, and the integrity of every individual regardless of gender, religion, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or citizenship status."

While we respect Commissioner Hodges' right to hold personal beliefs, it is unconscionable to hear remarks from Commissioner Hodges' in an official Commission meeting in 2021 and 2022, at a time when LGBTQ communities - particularly transgender youth - are facing record numbers of attacks on accessing healthcare and participating in school activities. LGBTQ people in San

Founded in 1974, San Diego Pride is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is: Fostering pride, equality, and respect for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities locally, nationally, and globally. www.sdpride.org

3620 30th St, San Diego, CA 92104 • info@sdpride.org Phone 619-297-7683

Diego - and all San Diegans - deserve representation on the Human Relations Commission that aligns with basic human rights, and their officially stated mission.

We, LGBTQ-affirming faith leaders of San Diego, call upon the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to stand with our LGBTQ community, stand up against transphobia and this continuing injustice that has occurred for months, and schedule a vote immediately to right this wrong and remove Commissioner Hodges from his appointed position on the San Diego County Human Relations Commission.

Blessings,

Reverend Kori Pacyniak

Mary Magdalene Catholic Community
Chair, San Diego Pride DevOUT LGBTQ
Interfaith Coalition

Susan Jester

Licensed Lay Minister
St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral
Co-Founder, San Diego Pride
DevOUT LGBTQ Interfaith Coalition