

**City of Colorado Springs Human Relations Commission  
Recommendations to the Colorado Springs City Council Regarding the Colorado Springs Transgender  
Community**

**Approved by the Human Relations Commission July 20, 2021**

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) objectives state the HRC may offer recommendations to City Council regarding emerging issues of social impact to the community.

In that spirit, the HRC would like to address the Council on such an issue: our transgender community.

On the heels of former District 5 City Councilor Jill Gaebler's transphobic remarks about the inclusion of transwomen in sports, we wish to bring current and new Council members up to speed on the status of an underserved community that consistently faces gender identity discrimination.

While every City Councilor is certainly encouraged to express their personal opinion or religious belief in the privacy of their own home, such an opinion expressed publicly encourages bias and discrimination when directed towards constituents in an external-facing context.

On the Subject of Transwomen in Sports:

- There are lawmakers in a growing number of states that are advancing and passing bills to bar transgender athletes in girls' sports, a culture clash that seems to have come out of nowhere.
- Rarely has an issue that so few people actually encounter — and one that public opinion analysts have only recently begun to study in depth — become a political flash point so quickly. The lack of awareness creates an environment in which the real impact of transgender participation in sports presents as an overstated exaggeration.
- The debate also raises questions—that ethicists, lawmakers and the courts are only beginning to address—on whether the decades-long effort to give women and girls equal opportunities in sports is compatible with efforts to give transgender people equal opportunities in life.
- These efforts have begun featuring women as public advocates.

Expanding the Rights of Transgender People in the U.S.:

Limiting the rights of transgender people is an issue that has resonance with an increasingly smaller share of the overall population. A new study by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) reported that only 7 percent of Americans were “completely against” pro-LGBTQ+ policies.

Here are some further statements of fact of which you may or may not be up to speed:

- The Pentagon recently issued new rules that prohibits any service member being forced out of the military on the basis of gender identity. The new rules prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. There will be a reexamination of records of service members who were discharged or denied reenlistment because of gender identity issues under the previous policy.
- The new U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health, a pediatrician, has become the first openly transgender federal official confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The first openly trans person was elected to a state Senate seat in Delaware and the first openly trans Native American was elected to the state legislature in Kansas. In 2017, a Virginia trans person became the first

openly trans state legislator in U.S. history and Colorado's own Representative Brianna Titone was the first openly transgender legislator in our state.

- Five years ago, the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education issued "guidance" to state and private educational institutions stating that these institutions must allow transgender students to use restroom facilities according to their gender identity.

#### Increasing Support for Transgender Identity Rights in Our Community

- The 2015 U.S Transgender Survey of nearly 28,000 transgender people in the U.S., produced by the National Center for Transgender Equality, states that "In over three generations, trans identity has gone from 0.2 percent to 1.8 percent, a staggering 800 percent increase." That appears to be because anti-trans attitudes are shifting for the better and more people are able to express themselves.
- In a 2019 PRRI survey, "America's Growing Support for Transgender Rights," more than six in ten (62%) Americans say they have become more supportive toward transgender rights compared to their views five years ago. By contrast, about one-quarter (25%) say their views are more opposed compared to five years prior.
- Majorities across all age groups say they would feel very or somewhat comfortable with a close friend who is transgender. There are no major differences across different age groups on this issue. (PRRI, *ibid*)
- More than three-quarters (79%) of Americans believe that transgender people face at least some stigma in their community, including just under four in ten (38%) Americans who believe transgender people face a lot of it. Seventeen percent of Americans think that transgender individuals face no stigma within their community.

In accordance with the rapidly changing environment around gender identity rights in general, the HRC would like to offer the following policy recommendations for consideration by the Colorado Springs City Council that would encourage greater equity and inclusion for trans individuals in our community:

1) Create an ordinance requiring the presence of all-gender bathrooms in all municipal buildings, including City Hall and park spaces. A 2013 Williams Institute study found that 54% of respondents in Washington D.C. reported health problems from having to avoid using public restrooms, including dehydration, urinary tract infections, kidney infection and other kidney-related problems. Making our City's bathrooms accessible to all is a public health and inclusion win.

2) Along those same lines, work with the Regional Building Commission to amend building code for new public accommodation buildings to allow for more flexible bathroom development that would include multi-stall all-gender bathrooms being acceptable under building code and allowances for single-stall bathrooms with shared handwashing facilities to be able to accommodate more people, including parents with families, people with disabilities, and non-binary transgender people.

3) Develop a statement to add to the City's non-discrimination policy that encourages City contractors and grant recipients to actively work toward transgender inclusion in their companies and organizations.

In conclusion, the HRC encourages City Council to engage in actionable policy development, implementation and practice, advancing towards a goal of diversity, equity and inclusion for "America's Olympic City USA" transgender residents, visitors and their allied business interests.