

Countering an NDO in Billings - Designing a Long-Term Strategy

Position Statement:

It is our intent to treat the LGBTQ community well. This does not require giving them 'protected class' legal status. Their long-term flourishing is better served by common sense kindness and resisting activist agendas', which go way beyond NDO's, and will stifle that flourishing. The role of enabler is easy, promoting flourishing requires ingenuity.

Explanation of current status:

February 24th 2020, the Billings City Council will consider a *Non-Agenda Council Initiative* that would put an NDO (Non-Discrimination Ordinance) on the council's agenda for March 23rd. As a non-agenda Council Initiative, it will come at the end of the meeting *after* the time for comments on non-agenda items. To be clear, near the end of the meeting, people are allowed 3 minutes to comment on any issue not on the formal agenda. After that time, this non-agenda item will be considered and voted on - no public comment is allowed then

Prior to the 24th meeting, we suggest the following: (**NOTE** you do not have to be in the city limits to do this.)

- ✚ It will be helpful if a few show up at the Monday meetings before the 24th.
- ✚ Write a short, respectful note to the Mayor and city council. (See addresses and phone number below)
- ✚ Call them and express your opinion i.e. *"In visiting with my neighbors, we feel this NDO is unnecessary and will only cause division."*
- ✚ NUMBERS WILL COUNT!

Strategy for February 24th:

Plan A:

Based upon our best information, it appears that this will be quietly voted down at this time. Some on the Council are concerned that this will complicate the Safety initiative. Based upon this information, we are asking you to do the following **Prior to the vote**:

- ✚ Be at the Council meeting at 5:30, come early, seating is limited. Plan to set through the entire meeting. Normal dress, no white shirts please.
- ✚ **Our success will depend upon us working together as a respectful team.** We urge you **NOT** to plan to testify – this will only fuel the fire.
- ✚ Towards the end of public testimony, one of us will simply ask for those opposed to the NDO to quietly stand.

Plan B: If... testimony from *proponents* appears to be strong enough that it requires our voice, our **leadership will determine the need** and signal a few articulate people to counter with short statements.

- ✚ Unity and teamwork will be critical at this point. In 2014, those who determined that they had to *have their say* only hurt us.
- ✚ Pray and be respectful – thank you for being a team player.
- ✚ Remember, if you're asked a question and don't have an informed response, "*no-comment*" is often the best response.

Long-Term, Pro-Active, Values Centered Planning: Attempts at NDO type activity will continue even though activist's efforts at the state and city levels have stalled. Thirty states don't have state-wide NDO's. Picking off Billings is now their goal in hopes of having a *mandate* at the legislature in 2020.

We are currently working to form a small committee of well-informed people to plan a long-term strategy to counter activist efforts. We want to create action plans that will promote the real flourishing of the LGBT community while protecting the values that benefit the entire trade area. Other values issues will be considered. **(More information about this issue can be found at bigskyworldview.org under Resources, Library, NDO.)**

Activities will include:

- ✚ Recruiting solid, well informed, respected City Council candidates. This needs to be an on-going effort, not one that pops up just before elections.
- ✚ Keeping the Council informed on values centered issues.
- ✚ Promoting values-centered messaging to the community on an ongoing basis.
- ✚ Using traditional media when possible, social and other media as alternatives.

- ✚ Consider use of such things as resolutions. While these carry no legal impact, they can influence public opinion and pressure.

Contact information for Billings City Council:

This city LINK is garbage. Use this as an **email address** city@billingsmt.gov and it will work. This will go to the entire council. There is also a LINK that allows you to email the entire council. You will also find a [Ward Map](#) to help you know what Ward you are in. You may need to expand the map a bit.

Nothing is more power than a phone call – voice to voice. Here are the phone numbers for each Councilperson:

Mayor Bill Cole – 406-657-8296

Ward 1:

Kindra Shaw – 406-670-7772

Mike Yakawich – 406-254-2445

Ward 2:

Frank Ewalt – 406-861-8964

Roy Neese – 406-794-3318

Ward 3:

Denise Joy – 406-647-0337

Danny Choriki – 406-748-6116

Ward 4:

Pam Purinton – 406-656-9495

Penny Ronning – 406-579-9778

Ward 5:

Mike Boyett – 406-694-2436

Shawn Brown – 406-698-2328

Respectfully, Dick Pence rapence45@gmail.com Cell 406-672-9207