



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
LYLE LARSON

DISTRICT 122

September 3, 2013

The Honorable Julian Castro
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283

Dear Mayor Castro:

The purpose of this letter is to state my opposition to the City of San Antonio's proposed non-discrimination ordinance.

While protecting citizens from discrimination is a worthy goal, this ordinance falls short by seeking only to add protection for certain individuals. It is my contention that no particular group should be singled out in such a way. Rather, we should aim to protect all citizens from any kind of discrimination. Perhaps the ordinance could be written with the intent to change the city code to protect all individuals equally.

Additionally, legal experts have raised concerns about the practical effects of this ordinance, including the potential for discrimination against individuals whose beliefs are contrary to those held by the ordinance's target community and the chilling effect it could have on free speech. How will the ordinance ensure that individuals who hold opposing beliefs are not discriminated against?

As a former City Councilman, I am dismayed that the Council has chosen to focus so much energy and attention on this issue, particularly when the City faces so many challenges that need to be addressed. It is not the role of the government, at any level, to police social issues in this manner. Instead, the Council should shift its focus back to providing core city services, such as roads, law enforcement, and animal control.

Frankly, the national attention that this proposal has garnered is embarrassing and has caused many to question the ability of the San Antonio City Council to achieve its mission. While this ordinance may further the future political agenda of some, the polarization of our community caused by this proposal is not worth any potential political gains for certain councilmembers. I respectfully recommend that you shelve this ill-conceived ordinance and focus instead on the core functions of city government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Lyle Larson", written over a horizontal line.

Lyle Larson

cc:

Councilmember Diego Bernal

Councilmember Ivy Taylor

Councilmember Rebecca Viagran

Councilmember Rey Saldana

Councilmember Shirley Gonzales

Councilmember Ray Lopez

Councilmember Cris Medina

Councilmember Ron Nirenberg

Councilmember Elisa Chan

Councilmember Carlton Soules