



Media Statement

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Oklahoma City Takes Historic Step for Gay Rights

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma - November 15, 2011 - [The Equality Network \(TEN\)](#) applauds the Oklahoma City City Council for voting 7-2 to add sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination policies for public employees. The move aligns Oklahoma City, the state's largest municipality, with Oklahoma County and the cities of Tulsa, Del City, Altus, McAlester, Miami, and Vinita, all of which protect their public employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation. There are more than 360 municipalities nationwide with similar policies.

In a packed City Council chamber, Mayor Mick Cornett and the 8 councilors heard impassioned citizens speak about the proposed policy change. Ed Shadid (Ward 2) authored the resolution. After nearly an hour of debate, six councilors and Mayor Cornett voted in favor of the policy change. Councilors Larry McAtee (Ward 3) and Ronald Skip Kelly (Ward 7) opposed the proposal.

"Today is a historic day for civil rights in Oklahoma." said James F. Cooper, member of The Equality Network's Board of Directors and one of those who spoke in favor of Shadid's resolution. "Oklahoma City just showed the nation what a compassionate, accepting, and forward-thinking community it is. It is a happy day for inclusion and fairness in our state."

Many major local employers and universities have nondiscrimination policies like that adopted by the City of Oklahoma City. They include leading companies like Devon, Chesapeake, Love's, and Kerr - McGee -- and institutions of higher education including the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City University, the University of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City Community College.

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[The Equality Network](#) works to achieve equality and secure legal protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Oklahomans through advocacy, coalition building, and individual empowerment in the political process.



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