



ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORDINANCE FILED TO EXPAND EQUAL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS IN ANCHORAGE *Assemblyman Bill Evans introduces legislation to advance equal rights*

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA—On Thursday, Anchorage Assemblyman Bill Evans filed with the Anchorage Municipal Clerk's Office a new ordinance that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected categories under the Municipality's equal rights law.

The goal of the ordinance, according to Evans, is to provide a balanced approach that respects the rights of everyone affected by this issue. "The ability of every person in society to be judged based upon their skill, accomplishments, and talents, and not because of some immutable characteristics, is a result we should encourage. At a time when we need more citizens to be productive income generators, we cannot tolerate impediments to employment that are not based on actual performance," stated Evans, a longtime employment attorney and former two-time Chairman of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce.

The ordinance embodies three main tenets:

- (1) It establishes that it is illegal to discriminate against any person based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- (2) It protects religious freedoms by including three specific religious-based exemptions from the ordinance.
- (3) It changes certain practices of the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission that will make it more efficient and effective for employers to defend themselves against charges of discrimination.

"The goal of this balanced approach is to make Anchorage a model of how a city can sensibly legislate the contentious and fractional boundaries which exist between the rights of various groups," Evans said. "In the final analysis, we share not only a city, but a community, and we must commit to the effort to find common ground -- an effort that is a continuation of our more than 200-year old mandate to form a 'more perfect union.'"

The ordinance will be introduced at the Anchorage Assembly's meeting on August 25 and will be on the agenda for public comment at the September 15 Assembly meeting.

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The ordinance's language is attached for your convenience. For more information, please contact Assemblyman Bill Evans at (907) 250-5490.

Assemblyman Bill Evans was elected in 2014 and serves the South Anchorage & Girdwood areas. He his wife and three children arrived in Alaska in 1998, after his service in the United States Army as a paratrooper and as a police officer in Ohio. Since arriving in Alaska, he has been a management-side employment and labor attorney. Bill was also a two-time chair of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Chair of the Alaska Mental Health Board, member of the Municipal Transportation Commission, and member of the Municipalities' Employment Relations Board.