

From: Mayor Lenny Curry
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2016 2:45 PM
To: Mayor Lenny Curry
Subject: Mayor Issues Directive to Change in Employment Policies

City of Jacksonville Employees:

In our nation, we have freedoms endowed by our Creator and protected in our Constitution. These divinely-inspired freedoms are the foundation of our republic and inform my strong belief that in our nation, state and city, we must be ever vigilant to remain free from discrimination. As our founders declared, we are obligated to honor and respect every individual's life, liberty, and opportunity to pursue happiness.

These principles led me to seek office and inspired me to lead the community in a series of conversations exploring the possibility of changes to local law as it relates to the human rights, religious liberties and economic freedoms for every citizen in Jacksonville.

Honoring my commitment to learn and lead on this issue, I conducted the following:

- Hosted three community conversations in geographic regions throughout the city
- Created and facilitated opportunities for persons to share their thoughts and experiences
- Participated in meetings with numerous business, civic, faith, and community leaders

Thousands of people participated in the Community Conversations with nearly 500 submitted comment cards and responses. As expected in a free society, we heard a wide array of voices. While these Community Conversations were, at times, contentious and spirited, they allowed people a platform to discuss one of the issues facing citizens in our city. It was critically important for me to convene people – those who may live and love differently in communities across this city – to sit side by side in the same room, to have a dialogue – many for the very first time.

In addition to keeping my promise to conduct these discussions, I have also overseen revisions to anti-harassment policies in our municipal government, broadening the policies on how people are treated in the workplace. Yet, there's an additional step that I'm convinced we should take. This morning, I instructed my Chief Administrative Officer, Chief of Staff, Director of Employee Services and General Counsel to develop a departmental directive that requires and ensures that our City's employment-related policies and practices are in compliance with all Federal and State laws. Such updated policies and practices shall preclude and prohibit all forms of employment discrimination upon any basis as currently interpreted by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (E.E.O.C.). Furthermore, I will make certain that such policy and practice updates also be applied to any vendors doing business with our City.

These actions move our city forward, while demonstrating my commitment to defending individual rights and promoting respect and equality in our workplace. We will now join other large employers who have been business leaders in anti-discriminatory employment related practices.

Based on the extensive community discussion and the actions that I have taken and directed, I have concluded my review, analysis and determination of this issue, and as such, I do not believe any further legislation would be prudent.

Each day, I grow increasingly frustrated by the threats and incidents of violence that continue to plague our city. I will continue my efforts to make this city safe because violent crime is still plaguing our neighborhoods, and too many young people are growing up without a sense of hope. It also means that I continue the fight to secure adoption of my solution for eliminating our crippling pension debt. There are no greater impediments to our vision for "One City. One Jacksonville."

I invite all to join me in these efforts.

Sincerely,
Lenny Curry
Mayor