



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Ron Nirenberg
Councilman
District 8

NEWS RELEASE

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Councilman Ron Nirenberg's Statement on Nondiscrimination Ordinance

SAN ANTONIO (Aug. 16, 2013) -- "Over the last several months, our city has engaged in a dialogue about what it means to be equal under the law, about discrimination, about hate, and about treating people with fairness and dignity. The intent of the nondiscrimination ordinance being debated is to ensure that under no circumstances should the government enable a tax-paying, law-abiding citizen to be discriminated against for who they are.

In a larger sense, the ordinance itself forces us to look within ourselves, and consider at what price we are willing to reaffirm the founding principle of our democracy: that in the eyes of the law, all people are created equal.

The tape recording made of Councilwoman Chan's staff meeting revealed some very ignorant and disturbing comments, some of them made by Jeff Bazan, who has since become a member of my staff. I have spoken with Jeff, and he has apologized for those statements, which he says do not reflect his personal feelings. I believe him to be sincere. I also met with my entire staff, letting them know that those comments do not reflect my views and they are unacceptable for any member of my team. Further, Jeff would not have been hired if I thought him to be the person I heard on the tape.

Hate has no place in San Antonio. We cannot turn our backs on the existing divisions that have revealed themselves during this debate. We need to heal our divisions as a community, and we can only achieve that by revealing them and addressing them together.

Our staff has experienced that today. Effective immediately, I have placed Jeff Bazan on an indefinite administrative leave. I hope that he will take the time to reflect and to heal. Our community must now engage in similar reflection over the issues that divide us. I believe that the successful passage of the nondiscrimination ordinance will be an important step in that process.

That is why, after months of deliberation and refinement, today, I am also announcing my support of the latest draft of the nondiscrimination ordinance. Every San Antonian deserves equal protection under the law, and I look forward to casting my vote to ensure it."

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