



In Support of: RES. 2020-0677 – Res. that, the Omaha City Council provides this Resolution as a public platform to engage all of our citizens in a discussion of positive action steps to address racism, injustice, inequality, economic disparities, and police-community relations

Inclusive Communities welcomes the intention of the Omaha City Council to create a public platform for citizens to engage in this discussion. In response to this opportunity here are our suggestions on the way forward:

Should this resolution pass, circulation of the availability of this platform to the general public is imperative for active and meaningful participation.

On Racism & Injustice

We look forward to seeing the specific action steps that the City intends to implement to address these issues within the city's departments practices. Specifically, this is an opportunity to undertake internal and external training simultaneously. As the need and desire for such training has previously been publicly acknowledged, entering into a resolution which establishes a foundation for this is a positive step.

Out of this, Inclusive Communities hopes to see greater representation across all departments of public service – including Black, Indigenous/Native, People of Color (BIPOC) with intersectional identities (person with disabilities, members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two Spirit (LGBTQIA2S+) community etc.) This will demonstrate that the City Council has put intention into forging community relations by ensuring appointed public leaders are representative of the citizenry and the communities in which they serve.

We also encourage the City Council to urge the school districts within Omaha city limits to add Black/Ethnic Studies as required rather than elective coursework. Over the weekend, students from the OPS system held a rally to express their desire for an expanded curriculum that brings greater visibility to the histories of minority and marginalized groups in this country. It is our hope that current curriculums will be broadened in the areas of history and social studies to be representative of histories of BIPOC in the US and in Nebraska in particular.

Inclusive Communities also supports the removal of armed SROs in schools, as students have acknowledged that this creates an intimidating environment. We believe that this is counterproductive to learning and forms the inception of distrust and fear of the police at this level of socialization. Recent statistics presented in the Omaha World Herald also show that the majority of students cited by SROs are BIPOC students and those with disabilities. We believe that it will instead be helpful to have more mental health and counselling services available to the student body.

It is also important that the City Council recognizes that the discussion on racism should not be limited to the black community, but that all marginalized ethnicities require equity and equal acknowledgement in our city. As such, it is important to ensure that there is sufficient support for



Native/Indigenous, immigrants, refugees, and DACA youth. We encourage City Council to look at what ways in which to urge the Nebraska State Legislature to promote and support quality of life, rights, and safety for both documented and undocumented immigrants (for example, declaring Omaha a sanctuary city).

On Inequality & Income Disparities

Inclusive Communities sees inequality and income disparities most glaringly in relation to housing accessibility in our City. To correct existing income disparities and inequalities, we welcome a review of the Nebraska Landlord Tenant Act and call for a city ordinance on anti-discrimination in housing sources of income. Source of income discrimination still occurs regularly, but there is nothing in the current Act which prevents this type of discrimination. For example, child support is not consistently recognized as a valid source of income which prevents access to housing for some single parent families.

We also encourage the City Council to examine the impacts of redlining. Even though this is an outdated and now illegal practice, its historic effects still persist and are responsible for creating housing disparities, unequal housing access, and obstacles to access for public goods such as food, transit, and healthcare. These effects may be ameliorated through review of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) distribution to require inclusion of affordable housing units in all projects. This would begin to address problems of housing inaccessibility and homelessness.

Furthermore, we call for a rationalization of SIDs and the annexations of West Omaha housing developments to ensure that these actions do not create or deepen disadvantages for East/North/South Omaha. The city takes on a greater tax burden and responsibility in caring for these housing developments which usually exclude or are financially inaccessible for the majority of the mid-lower income tax base.

On Police-Community Relations

The City is yet to address that the overwhelming majority of people pulled over/stopped by police are people of color, we believe that acknowledgement of such practices is the first step towards taking corrective action.

We are also dismayed at the silence on the part of the Police to publicly disavow and disassociate itself with white supremacist groups. This silence gives the perception that these groups and their biases and behaviors are condoned by the Police, which we are certain is untrue.

We understand that Police do feel the need for support right now as the actions of a few has soured the public perception of the service on a national scale. While we certainly recognize that the police officers are themselves not racist, it is that the institution itself possesses problematic ties to racism. At the recent Back the Blue Event, however, the Nebraska Proud Boys, one of the largest white supremacist groups in the state, were visibly present along with other White Nationalist groups. If the



Police are to continue espousing a desire to improve relations with communities of color, Immigrants/Refugees, LGBTQIA2S+, Jewish, Muslim and other religious minority groups in Omaha the OPD needs to actively disassociate and call out/disavow those groups at public events such as that, as well as in written statements and Social Media posts. The failure to firmly take a stand and state that the Departments values and mission are in no way connected to the values and missions of those organizations said so much more than the statements calling for community reconciliation.

We further recognize that the police have taken steps to increase community policing and deepen ties. We acknowledge that the programs in various communities do exist but question their overall effectiveness. While police shootings and violence are down, we are still seeing a disproportionate number of Black and Native/Indigenous people being stopped, arrested and incarcerated. We encourage a realistic investigation into what causes these statistics. Furthermore, there is still disproportion in the numbers of minority officers, and we believe that increasing their representation on the force will be one of the most effective ways to build lasting ties in marginalized communities. Therefore, we suggest more focused and intentional recruitment efforts to achieve this end and change the overall culture to focus on de-escalation instead of criminalization.

In Support of: RES. 2020-0678 – Res. that, the City Council of the City of Omaha urges the Nebraska State Legislature to place a ballot question before Nebraska voters at a primary or general election to repeal the ban on affirmative action in employment and contracting in Nebraska’s political subdivisions.

Inclusive Communities stands in support of this resolution to repeal the ban on affirmative action in employment and contracting.

According to the Omaha World Herald, the current ban prevents public agencies, such as universities and city governments, from considering race, gender and ethnicity when deciding contracts, in hiring and in the award of scholarships. This presents a significant obstacle to equity, and correcting the problems of inequity in our City.

We commend the City Council for bringing forth this resolution and the various lobby groups for taking these steps to push this issue towards the Nebraska State Legislature. Passing this resolution will strengthen the arguments of lobbyists on behalf of the City and give them greater strength.

Affirmative action will create opportunities for minority and underserved groups, and make strides towards correcting current income inequalities they currently experience.