

To the honorable members of the Palo Alto City Council:

The Palo Alto Human Relations Commission thanks you for your dedication, strength, and leadership in assuring Palo Alto's steadfast commitment to maintaining a welcoming city that celebrates diversity and opposes all attempts to undermine the safety, security, and rights of members of our community.

Hateful rhetoric that has plagued our nation, state, and city over the past several months has struck fear in many in our community. The Palo Alto we all know is a city of respect and tolerance, but the one thing we will not tolerate is intolerance. The Human Relations Commission is committed to being present and available to all in the community who fear their rights and safety are threatened.

Perhaps no time in this Commission's history have we been more needed than now. The Human Relations Commission is an advisory body for Council, but we are also an ear for those in the community who feel they need to voice their concerns. The Human Relations Commission wants to assure the public they are always welcome at our meetings, to voice their concerns, to voice their fears. Our mission is "to promote the just and fair treatment of all people in Palo Alto, particularly our most vulnerable populations. By promoting awareness of issues and enabling conversations that enhance inclusion, the HRC strives to create a community where civility, respect and responsible actions are the norm." Now particularly we commit to listening and giving visibility to unjust and unfair treatment. We are here to listen, and to raise awareness of concerns of our community.

The Human Relations Commission is doing everything we can to proactively address issues of concern to human dignity in our community. We serve at the pleasure of Council, and we are honored and eager to continue our mission of inclusivity and tolerance through your recent Resolution.

Our Commission has been working tirelessly over the past several years on these very issues. We held an Immigrant Voices speaker series during our commission meetings to learn about the immigrant experience here in Palo Alto. Our Commission recently co-hosted an Immigration and Ally forum in January and just last week several Commissioners were closely involved with the first of a four-part forum titled Being Different Together, which aims to bring people together to work towards building and nurturing a community that models respect for differences. We continue to seek out related community events and partners, and aim to share this information with the community via a Human Services email list serve. Our Commission is also planning for future events and forums such as a Service Workers forum to be held later this year in order to help educate and inform low-wage workers of their rights.

The Palo Alto Human Relations Commission continues to fight against hate and bigotry in all forms and continues to work towards keeping Palo Alto a safe, tolerant, and welcoming community for all regardless of race, nationality, religious worship, sexuality, age, immigration status, political affiliation, or zip code. We are here to help assist you in anyway to make these goals a reality. Thank you.