

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COMMISSION OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY,
GEORGIA, TO SUPPORT THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY AND TO PROCLAIM
ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY A SAFE HAVEN FOR LGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS**

WHEREAS, across the nation, there has been a rise in legislation and social attitudes that threaten the rights, safety, and dignity of LGBTQIA+ individuals; and

WHEREAS, the trans community has been particularly targeted in the recent presidential election by national campaign groups spending nearly \$40 million on anti-trans advertising, which is more than those same groups spent on ads addressing housing, immigration, and the economy combined¹; and

WHEREAS, the [ACLU has tracked](#), as of November 8, 2024, a total of 532 proposed anti-LGBTQIA+ bills across the United States in this year's legislative session alone, including 14 in the Georgia State Legislature²; and

WHEREAS, the above circumstances create an imperative for communities to affirm their commitment to protection and support of LGBTQIA+ people; and

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County is a community that values diversity, inclusivity, and the well-being of all its residents, recognizing the richness that such diversity brings to the social, economic, and cultural life of the area; and

WHEREAS, the LGBTQIA+ community is a vital part of Athens-Clarke County, contributing to its diversity, strength, and vibrancy; and

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County upholds the principles of equality, justice, and the right of every individual to live without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence; and

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County has established a Human Relations Commission, comprising fifteen diverse residents, whose mission is to foster meaningful dialogue between the community and local government, educate residents on pathways for addressing discrimination, and provide informed policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable Athens-Clarke County; and

WHEREAS, Athens-Clarke County has established a Department of People and Belonging whose mission is to cultivate an inclusive, equitable, and supportive community by embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion principles; to educate, advocate, and commit to community outreach; to assure accessible city services and equitable outcomes for all community members and employees; and to protect the fundamental rights of individuals, recognizing and valuing diverse lived experiences, and using community input and research to proactively address and close equity gaps; and

¹Source:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-anti-transgender-political-ads-are-dominating-the-airwaves-this-election>

²Source: <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2024>

WHEREAS, in June of 2020, and at the behest of local LGBTQIA+ residents and advocates, the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission approved funding for the Rainbow Crosswalk Intersection at College Square, which was successfully installed and subsequently formally dedicated on October 11, 2022; and

WHEREAS, on August 3, 2021, at the behest of local Civil Rights leaders and LGBTQIA+ residents and advocates, the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission adopted, by recommendation of the Commission's Legislative Review Committee, an Ordinance to Amend the Code of Ordinances of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, by adopting a new Chapter 6-20, "Unlawful Discrimination" in Title 6 "Licenses and Business Regulation," also known among community members as the "Non-Discrimination Ordinance" or "NDO," which subsequently led to the establishment of the aforementioned Human Relations Commission; and

WHEREAS, on June 7, 2022 the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission adopted two Resolutions to designate the month of June as Athens Pride Month and to formally recognize and observe Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2022, LGBTQIA+ residents and advocates organized and successfully held the inaugural Athens Pride Parade, which continues to be held annually in downtown Athens; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2023, the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission adopted a Resolution to Display the Progress Pride Flag in Recognition of Athens Pride Month as well as a Resolution to Display the Juneteenth Flag in Recognition of Juneteenth;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia as follows:

Section 1. Athens-Clarke County shall be a Safe Haven for the LGBTQIA+ Community, and is hereby committed to creating a supportive environment where LGBTQIA+ individuals can live authentically and openly without fear.

Section 2. The Athens-Clarke County Government and its People and Belonging Department recommit itself to the the following, with renewed support for the LGBTQIA+ community during this vulnerable time:

- A. Embracing its mission to "engage in extensive community education, outreach, dialogue, and recruitment that prioritizes diversity, inclusion, representation, belonging, and equity" and to "assess and make policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission;" and
- B. Supporting the mission and scope of the Human Relations Commission; and
- C. Upholding the tenets of the 2021 Non-Discrimination Ordinance that proclaims the right of an otherwise qualified person to be free from discrimination in employment, housing, commerce and more because of that person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, or veteran/military status; and
- D. Supporting events and programs that celebrate LGBTQIA+ identity and culture, enhancing community solidarity and visibility; and
- E. Encouraging law enforcement and public safety officials in Athens-Clarke County to undergo training to address the concerns of the LGBTQIA+ community with sensitivity and competence, ensuring a safe and respectful interaction.

Section 3. The Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission hereby proclaim their opposition to anti-LGBTQIA+ and anti-transgender bills being introduced into the Georgia Assembly and Senate, and urge the Georgia Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives to promote policies that will end all forms of discrimination and work towards a goal of becoming a welcoming and inclusive state for our children.

Section 4. The Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission direct the Clerk of Commission to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor and any State Representatives and Senators that represent the residents of Athens-Clarke County.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 3rd day of December, 2024.

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY,
GEORGIA

By: Kelly P. Jo

Mayor

Attest: Shemekia Armstrong

Deputy Clerk of Commission

