

Dear Senators of the University of Florida:

Subject: Proposed Charter Amendment Information

The passage of Amendment 2 in Florida and Proposition 8 in California has emboldened some to strip away human rights' protections here in Gainesville. They proposed an amendment to the city charter to void current and future anti-discrimination laws and policies not protected by Florida's Civil Rights Act. This will be decided in a referendum on March 24th's city ballot.

This amendment is drafted in such a way that its full impact remains uncertain. But Gainesville's City Attorney confirms it will immediately revoke human rights' protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. If passed, the amendment will effectively:

- Eliminate antidiscrimination laws in Gainesville for gay, lesbian and transgender citizens. In other words, it will be legal to discriminate in employment, housing, and public accommodation on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Prohibit Gainesville's City Commission from passing or enforcing antidiscrimination categories beyond those currently in specific statutes of Florida's Civil Rights Act. Thus, protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity, preferential hiring of veterans, and preferential selection of local contractors for city projects will be eliminated. The Commission will neither be able to restore these protections, nor add others (e.g., pregnancy and political affiliation).
- Surrender sole power to dictate what is best for Gainesville residents' antidiscrimination laws to state politicians in Tallahassee.
- Ruin Gainesville's reputation and economic outreach as an inclusive community. Currently, Gainesville welcomes all who come to work, learn, or visit. University of Florida and many Fortune 500 companies make it a priority to cultivate increased diversity in their workforce. Unfortunately, amendment supporters want to squelch this.

Equality Is Gainesville's Business currently wages a vigorous campaign against this harmful amendment. On behalf of the LGBT Concerns Committee, I ask you to communicate your support of Equality Is Gainesville's Business' efforts. Please, educate voters about this issue. Urge them to reject this proposed charter amendment. Request that they preserve our reputation as an open community. And implore voters to promote equality for all Gainesville's citizens. University of Florida stands to lose much if Gainesville loses its receptive status. If the opponents of equality are successful here, they will undoubtedly employ these fear tactics elsewhere in Florida and throughout our nation.

Presidential LGBT Concerns Committee