

Bloomington Human Relations Commission Ordinance

Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation

The Bloomington Human Relations Ordinance was established by the Bloomington City Council to protect the rights of all its citizens to have equal opportunity in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations and financing. The Human Relations Commission's mission is to foster tolerance and mutual respect through education and public awareness programs, to deter and prevent unlawful discrimination through the implementation and enforcement of the Bloomington Human Relations Ordinance.

In ensuring that all of its citizens would be protected from discrimination, On October 28, 2002, the Bloomington City Council approved an amendment to the Human Relations Commission's anti-discrimination law. The change to the Ordinance prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, and finance.

"Sexual Orientation" is defined as "homosexuality, bisexuality, or heterosexuality whether the orientation is real or perceived. Discriminate is defined as "to make a difference in treatment, or favor any person because of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability unrelated to ability.

The ordinance provides for an exemption for religious institutions. The exemption reads as follows: "Nothing in this chapter shall apply to decisions of a religious society, association, organization or institution affecting the definition, promulgation or advancement of the mission, practices, or beliefs of the society, association, organization or institution. This exemption was fashioned after the Human Relations Ordinance of the City of Chicago.

The Bloomington Human Relations Commission held public hearings where comments were received. After receiving the public comments the Commission voted 3-1 to recommend that the City Council pass the proposed ordinance.

On October 28, 2002, the ordinance came before the Bloomington City Council. The public was again allowed to speak on the ordinance change. After much debate the ordinance was approved by the Council.

For information regarding the Ordinance change or any portion of the Bloomington Human Relations Ordinance, contact: Ernestine Jackson, Equal Opportunity Associate, 109 E. Olive St., (309)434-2218.