

December 13, 2023

As organizations led by and serving LGBTQ+ people in the City of Chicago, we believe in a Chicago that is inclusive, equitable, and affirming for all people, including communities of color, immigrants and refugees, and LGBTQ+ people. Chicago must welcome people – residents and guests alike – as they are and ensure equitable access for all to services, supports, and investments.

That's why we unequivocally condemn attacks on the City's Welcoming City Ordinance, including seven recently introduced ordinances that would cruelly repeal the Welcoming City Ordinance. We support the Welcoming City Ordinance and oppose these cynical efforts, which do not align with our city's values. We call on the Chicago City Council to reject these ordinances.

The Welcoming City Ordinance is foundational to Chicago being a municipality that protects and affirms all immigrants living in Chicago, including an estimated 10,800 undocumented LGBTQ+ individuals. The Welcoming City Ordinance also protects people of color against racial profiling by law enforcement. LGBTQ+ people have a strong interest in ensuring that our communities are safe from criminalization, police brutality, and other forms of violence. Repealing the Welcoming City Ordinance would increase the already high likelihood that all immigrants, including LGBTQ+ immigrants, would experience harm and violence at the hands of local and federal law enforcement officials. A repeal would also divert local resources to enforce federal immigration laws rather than working to keep our communities safe in Chicago.

Furthermore, these efforts to repeal the Welcoming City Ordinance are rooted in racism and xenophobia against the thousands of migrants who have recently arrived in Chicago. Yet, the Welcoming City Ordinance does not impact in any way the services and programming provided (now or in the future) by the City of Chicago to these migrants. Plus, in a legal distinction, the migrants who are in Chicago are not undocumented; they are asylum seekers. But some politicians would rather engage in cynical ploys and cruel gestures than lean into their humanity and use their positions to help educate their constituents about reality.

We know the vision of a welcoming city is a constant work in progress and requires consistent civic engagement. We also acknowledge this City's historical economic and social inequities, including, but not limited to, severe disinvestments in communities of color and an epidemic of gun violence against those same communities as well as LGBTQ+ people and women. But these proposed ordinances are not solutions. Instead, they are cynical political stunts.

Chicago must be a welcoming city for all. We can achieve meaningful investments and change across all communities and we call on the Chicago City Council to work progressively together for that purpose. As organizations dedicated to LGBTQ+ equality and justice, we will keep working with partners and communities to transform the vision into reality.

AIDS Foundation Chicago

Association of Latinos/as/xs Motivating Action

Brave Space Alliance

Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus

Chicago Therapy Collective

Equality Illinois

Howard Brown Health

HRC Chicago Steering Committee

Life is Work

Pride Action Tank

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago