



Date: December 7, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Council

From: Councilwoman Cindy Allen, Second District
Councilwoman Dr. Suely Saro, Sixth District

Subject: Gender-Inclusive Language Policy

R-35

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Recommendation to direct the City Attorney to prepare a Resolution to declare an Inclusive Language Policy for all future Long Beach Municipal Code ordinances presented to the City Council, as well as for future City Council Policies and ballot proposals for City Charter amendments; and

Recommendation to direct the City Attorney to prepare an Ordinance amending the Long Beach Municipal Code to state that all gender references in the Code shall be considered neutral and inclusive in form and context. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION:

The City of Long Beach government represents, supports, and serves all residents throughout the City of Long Beach. While the City acts on behalf of all Long Beach residents, the current Municipal Code and Council Policies do not fully reflect the diversity of its people. Inclusive language is defined as "language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people, especially gender specific words".

The Long Beach City Council has periodically amended its policies and codes to reflect societal changes and the needs of the people it serves. It is time for the City and Council to move forward and promote inclusivity of all Long Beach residents, including but not limited to the City's Non-binary and Transgender residents.

Our Transgender and Non-Binary community face stigma surrounding who they are from an early age. Often rooted in inaccurate beliefs and politically motivated attacks on transgender and non-binary identities, this stigma erects barriers in virtually every facet of life, denying transgender and non-binary people the equal opportunity to succeed and be accepted for who they are. Moreover, stigma against transgender and non-binary people can have long-term impacts on mental health and economic and housing



stability, especially if individuals experience familial rejection and isolation from social support systems.

Sadly, 2021 has already seen at least 48 transgender or gender non-conforming people fatally shot or killed by other violent means. We say at least because too often these stories go unreported — or misreported. In previous years, the majority of these people were Black and Latinx transgender women. For many Transgender and Non-Binary people, living openly can be its own act of defiance in a society that continues to set rigid cultural norms for gender identity and expression.

Ending this epidemic requires addressing and eliminating stigma against Transgender and Non-Binary people, as well as, discrimination across all facets of society and embracing people of all genders for who they are.

This year, we have seen more than 250 anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) bills introduced into legislatures around the country. The prime target of these bills has been our Transgender and Non-binary communities, specifically our Transgender youth. In the last few years, we have seen anti-Transgender and anti-Nonbinary discrimination rise across our country. It is imperative that The City of Long Beach, recognized by the Human Rights Campaign as one of the best cities in the nation when it comes to supporting its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community with local laws and policies, include a Gender-Inclusive Language Policy that represents and recognizes all its residents.

Partial summary of enacted legislation in favor of Gender-Inclusive Language:

- The United States capital introduced “X” gender options on driver’s licenses and identification cards in 2017.
- California began offering non-binary birth certificates since the start of 2018 and introduced gender-neutral driver’s licenses in 2019.
- As of 2019, 10 other states and Washington, D.C. have enacted policies that allowed for the issuance of third gender IDs.
- The United States House of Representatives approved the rules package for the 117th Congress in January of 2021, which introduced utilizing non-binary or non-gendered language, in official Congressional documents.
- On June 30, 2021, the Biden Administration announced passport reforms to include gender ‘X’ marker, and removed anti-Transgender and anti-Nonbinary barriers, like eliminating the medical requirement for a person to change the gender marker on their passport and consular forms.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on November 23, 2021.



FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation requests the City Attorney to prepare a Resolution to declare an Inclusive Language Policy for all future Long Beach Municipal Code ordinances and prepare an Ordinance amending the Long Beach Municipal Code to state that all gender references in the Code shall be considered neutral and inclusive in form and context. The requested action is anticipated to have a minimal impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a minimal impact on existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with the recommendation.