

Hillsborough Passes LGBTQ Nondiscrimination Protections

By Administrator

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The Board of Commissioners in Hillsborough, North Carolina voted to pass an ordinance (see page 70) broadly protecting members of the LGBTQ community from discrimination. The vote makes Hillsborough, a town with a population of 7,000 people, the first municipality in the state to pass LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination protections in recent years; from 2016 until December 1, 2020, the state laws HB2 and HB142 banned municipalities from protecting their residents from discrimination.

Several other municipalities are set to discuss LGBTQ nondiscrimination ordinances in the coming weeks. Leaders in Carrboro and Chapel Hill will meet Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively, to discuss and vote on their own ordinances. And on Tuesday, January 19, elected officials from the Orange County Commission and Durham City Council will consider similar protections.

Jenn Weaver, Mayor of Hillsborough, said: “Every person deserves to be recognized in their full humanity and treated with decency and fairness. I am so proud for Hillsborough to join local governments across the state to protect all those within our jurisdictions to ensure the rights of everyone who lives, works, and plays in our communities.”

Town of Hillsborough Commissioner Matt Hughes added: “The nondiscrimination ordinances that Hillsborough and localities across the state will pass show the commitment we as local officials have to the constitutional principle of equal protection under the law. As a biracial gay man myself, it brings me hope that our constituents know we not only see them, but that we will do all within our power to support, enable, and protect them as they live their lives without fear of discrimination for themselves and their families.”

Kendra R. Johnson, Executive Director of Equality North Carolina, said: “It’s a new day for LGBTQ North Carolinians, who for too long have lived under the legacy of discrimination in this state enshrined by HB2 and HB142. This move by Hillsborough’s elected officials is an important first step in affirming that North Carolina is a safe and welcoming place for LGBTQ people to call home – but the work is far from over. We must keep fighting until LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections extend well beyond the borders of this incredible small town, and ensure that our communities are protected within every corner of this state and every arena of life.”

Allison Scott, Director of Policy & Programs at Campaign for Southern Equality, said:

“We live in divisive and challenging times, so seeing local communities unite to pass common

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sense legislation protecting their neighbors from discrimination is an inspiring breath of fresh air. This leadership from lawmakers in Hillsborough and other municipalities will move North Carolina closer to our vision of a state where all people can thrive. LGBTQ North Carolinians – especially transgender people like me – have lived under the trauma and erasure of anti-LGBTQ laws in our state for too long. But today, many of us feel valued.”