

INTRODUCED: September 26, 2016

AN ORDINANCE No. 2016-254

To establish a Task Force on the Establishment of a Human Rights Commission to evaluate the need for and scope of a Human Rights Commission and to provide the Council with recommendations concerning any necessity to create such a commission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrons – Ms. Robertson and Mr. Agelasto

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form and legality  
by the City Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
PUBLIC HEARING: NOV 14 2016 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interests of the citizens of the city of Richmond that the Council establish a Task Force on the Establishment of a Human Rights Commission to evaluate the need for and scope of a Human Rights Commission and to provide the Council with recommendations concerning any necessity to create such a commission; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that the annual operating costs for the Task Force will be approximately \$5,000, including ten staff hours;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That the Council hereby establishes the Task Force on the Establishment of a Human Rights Commission (“the Task Force”) pursuant to the following guidelines:

AYES:                    9                    NOES:                    0                    ABSTAIN:                    \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED:            NOV 14 2016            REJECTED:                    \_\_\_\_\_                    STRICKEN:                    \_\_\_\_\_

A. **Purpose.** The Task Force shall evaluate the need for and scope of a Human Rights Commission and provide the Council with recommendations concerning any necessity to create such a commission. For purposes of section 2-761 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2015), as amended, the Task Force is classified as “advisory.”

B. **Appointment and Composition.** The Task Force shall consist of five residents of the city of Richmond appointed by the Council. All appointments shall be governed in all other respects by sections 2-755 and 2-756 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2015), as amended.

C. **Duties.** On or before June 5, 2017, the Task Force shall submit to the Council’s Organizational Development Standing Committee a report containing the Task Force’s advice and recommendations with regard to the following:

1. The existence and frequency of suspected violations of the Virginia Human Rights Act, codified as sections 2.2-3900 through 2.2-3903 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

2. The appropriate mechanisms to address any human rights issues identified by the Task Force and to promote human rights in the city of Richmond.

3. Any need to create a Human Rights Commission and the scope of the duties and objectives of any such commission.

4. If it is determined that there is a need for the creation of a Human Rights Commission, a proposed list of any such commission’s duties in accordance with section 2.04.1 of the Charter of the City of Richmond (2010), as amended, section 15.2-965 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, the Virginia Human Rights Act, codified as sections 2.2-3900 through 2.2-3903 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, and

other applicable laws.

5. Potential opportunities for the City of Richmond to establish a dialogue within communities to promote solutions to human rights issues in collaboration with existing groups and organization in the city of Richmond.

6. Potential opportunities to educate and provide the public with resources through forums, seminars or other events conducive to discussions about human rights issues with community leaders.

7. Any impediments to the transparency of human rights investigations, tracking the patterns of complaints or gathering data.

8. Methods to keep the Council apprised of advancements in human rights.

**D. Conduct of Affairs.**

1. **Quorum.** Three members of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum.

2. **Duration.** The Task Force shall continue in existence until it has submitted the report called for by § 1(C) of this ordinance.

3. **Meetings.** The Task Force shall meet at least once a month.

4. **Reporting.** On the first day of each month, the Task Force shall transmit to the Council a brief summary of the Task Force's activities for the preceding month.

5. **Freedom-of-Information.** Task Force meetings, minutes and records shall be subject to the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, codified as sections 2.2-3700 through 2.2-3714 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

6. **Staff and Resources.** The Office of the Council Chief of Staff shall provide such staff and resources as may be necessary to assist the Task Force in the duties imposed by this ordinance.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.



Lou Brown Ali  
Council Chief of Staff

# Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

## Office of the Council Chief of Staff

### Council Ordinance/Resolution Request

**TO** Allen L. Jackson, Richmond City Attorney

**THROUGH** Lou Brown-Ali, Council Chief of Staff *LB*

**FROM** Joyce L. Davis, Council Policy Analyst  
Office of the Council Chief of Staff *JLD.*

**COPY** Ellen Robertson, 6<sup>th</sup> District Council member  
Haskell Brown, Deputy City Attorney  
Meghan Brown, Deputy Council Chief of Staff *MB*  
Kiya Stokes, 6<sup>th</sup> District Council Liaison

**DATE** September 13, 2016

**PAGE/s** 1 of 3

**TITLE:** Ordinance to Establish a Human Rights Commission Task Force

This is a request for the drafting of an **Ordinance**  **Resolution**

**REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON**

**SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE**

Council Member Ellen Robertson

Education and Human Services

#### ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY

Ordinance to establish a Human Rights Commission Task Force to identify community needs and consideration for the development of a Human Rights Commission with recommendations due June 1, 2017.

#### BACKGROUND

This Ordinance request is to establish a Task Force as an advisory body to serve City Council with recommendations that will identify community needs and consideration for the development of a Human Rights Commission to promote human rights in the City of Richmond. The purpose of the Task Force is to assess the need for and scope of a Human Rights Commission as an advisory board of the City Council. The Task Force will advise and recommend to Council in matters of equal opportunity to ensure equal protection of all persons and groups against discrimination as established by the Code of Virginia § 2.2-3900, Virginia Human Rights Act.

The duties of the Task Force are to provide recommendations to the City Council on the appropriate vehicle for addressing and/or promoting human rights in the City of

Richmond. The Task Force should determine a need for the Human Rights Commission, its scope and objectives; review opportunities for the City of Richmond to create dialogue in the community to promote and facilitate human rights issues in collaboration with existing groups in the city; seek opportunities for education and resources by considering forums, seminars or events for community members to discuss human rights issues; examine the need for transparency and gather data to track patterns of complaints; and devise methods to advise City Council for the fulfillment of human rights.

The recommended composition of the Task Force is five city residents as appointed by Council. The duration of the Task Force is recommended for a minimum of six months with a recommendation due to City Council by June 1, 2017 of the need for a Human Rights Commission and a delineation of the Commission's duties, if it is determined there is a need.

This initial Task Force will be staffed by the Office of the Council Chief of Staff for approximately 10 hours at a costs of \$5,000.

The expected date of introduction is September 26, 2016.

### **Relevant Human Rights Laws**

State policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia under the Virginia Human Rights Act, Virginia Code § 2.2-3900 provides safeguards for all individuals within the Commonwealth from unlawful discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, or disability, in places of public accommodation including educational institutions and in real estate transactions; in employment; preserve the public safety, health and general welfare; and to protect citizens from unfounded charges of unlawful discrimination. Further provisions of the Virginia Code (§2.2-3901 and §2.2-3902) prohibit unlawful discriminatory practice because of gender, against minors, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Richmond City Code § 2.04.1 declares a local policy to establish a human rights commission consistent with the provisions of the Code of Virginia §15.2-965 that allow any locality to enact an ordinance establishing a local commission on human rights which shall have the powers and duties granted by the Virginia Human Rights Act.

Richmond City Council, Ord. 2006-90-93, adopted April 24, 2006 abolished the Human Services Commission and the Human Relations Commission which acted in an advisory and resource capacity to City Council. The Commission, appointed by the City Council, had the following responsibilities: conduct research, receive complaints about alleged acts of discrimination, conduct studies and hold hearings, enforce provisions of the Fair Housing ordinance, and enforce the human rights ordinance for procurement of goods and services for contracts over \$10,000 and with entities employing 15 or more persons. Ordinance 2006-90-93 restructured departments and abolished the Human Services Commission in 2006.

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Fiscal Impact	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Budget Amendment Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact	\$	
Staff Costs - \$5,000		

**Attachment/s**      Yes  No

Richmond City Council Ordinance/Resolution Request Form/updated 12.22.08/srs