

Position Paper on the Idaho Falls 2013 Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, September 18, 2013

Sharon D. Parry

Why This Ordinance Matters

There are so many important issues in this mayoral race, and they all need to be discussed. However, I recognize the important issues surrounding the anti-discrimination ordinance and want to be responsive to concerns expressed.

Since December, I have listened to several dozen personal stories about why we should have an anti-discrimination ordinance. I have one too. A smart and wonderful friend of mine received her degree and had a great, professional, white-color job until recently. As soon as my friend came out of the closet, she was fired. An anti-discrimination ordinance might have prevented the loss of her job.

Why This Position Paper

On September 12, 2013, I voted for passage of the city anti-discrimination ordinance without the public accommodations section. This pleased many and displeased some on both sides of the issue. There has been, however, significant confusion over this ordinance, and despite my writing a guest opinion which appeared in the Post Register on September 5, 2013 (Attachment 1), confusion over and intentional distortion of my views on the public accommodations portion of the ordinance have surfaced.

In the spirit of having an accessible and open campaign, I have allowed extensive comments on my Facebook Page, most from certain leaders in the LGBT community who are critical of my vote and cast fairly harsh aspersions against me personally. This has been disappointing as I have many friends in the LGBT community and have worked hundreds of hours toward a consensus on what I view as a very important issue. Although I have posted numerous comments and responses on my Facebook page (Attachments 2 and 3), one would have to spend hours reading and compiling these statements. Hence, the purpose of this piece is to consolidate and compile my position on the ordinance in context.

Consistency

From the start, I have been very consistent: promote a neat, clean, and legally defensible anti-discrimination ordinance with the housing and employment legs, and either eliminate or work through the public accommodations portion until it could gain broad community buy in and be legally defensible.

In January I said to the LGBT community that I would promote a neat and clean ordinance with housing and employment legs. LGBT activist Theron McGriff is right-- I also did say that I would work toward unanimous support among the council. I believed at the time, and I still believe, that the two legs were not too controversial, and unanimous support could be attained.

Then the neat and clean ordinance got side tracked (see Attachment 1). Three months later, in April, I met with our new city attorney and two council members. In that meeting, council members Tom and Karen insisted that the public accommodations portion be included in the first draft because other Idaho cities were including it or had already included it by then. I distinctly said that I was not in favor of including a public accommodations portion written for other cities. I had read many other cities' versions of the public accommodations portion, and I knew it was a quagmire. Anyone who knows me knows I am a stickler for details and doing my homework. Nevertheless, the first draft included public accommodations because two council members outnumbered me.

In order to put an ordinance into law, Idaho requires three separate readings (essentially an ordinance needs to come before the council at three separate meetings). This law, however, can be suspended, and the three readings can be waived within one meeting, typically only done if the issue is non-controversial and the council does not sense that there needs to be more opportunity for public input. In a July council meeting, the ordinance contained all three legs. A motion was made to pass the ordinance only on the first reading. Such a vote puts an ordinance “into play” so that the public now has something to comment on. Why did I vote “yes” on the first reading of the anti-discrimination ordinance? Although I clearly suspected that the public accommodations would not sit well in the general public, but for the public to start digesting, there must be a motion, and it must be voted on. Because the motion was only on the first reading, I voted “yes.” If the motion waived all three readings and been adopted into law that same evening, I would have voted “no.”

Whenever I was asked what the timeline was for the council to discuss and vote on the ordinance, I would say that we would hopefully have it wrapped up before Labor Day, and conclude with the statement that the ordinance was too important to have it become a political football during campaign season. Since the April meeting with our city attorney, I knew that Tom and Karen were in favor of the public accommodations portion being included. I was still optimistic that the final ordinance would only include the housing and employment portions.

"I didn't know it was in the ordinance," was said by me the night the ordinance passed to Theron McGriff (who was sitting on the front row in the audience) as my reply to his statement in that same meeting (Attachment 4). Yes, I could have been more clear; "I didn't know then it was *going to eventually be* in the proposed ordinance" would have been a more accurate representation of the history. When I said this to Theron in January, I didn't foresee two council members taking the ordinance on a different path three months later.

In December, when I first asked the council as to whether they were interested in tackling an anti-discrimination ordinance, I developed and distributed the Reading List (Attachment 5, sent to a wide variety of people all along the spectrum who wanted to “read up” on anti-discrimination ordinances) which includes web links to other cities' ordinances, including Salt Lake City's which does not include a public accommodations provision. Of course I read and re-read each item before I added it to my own reading list. Again, anyone who knows me knows that I do my homework.

City Hall has been a ship without a rudder for some time now. One symptom of this is the way in which the ordinance agenda item was first on, then off, then on again. On August 8th, the council said in our city council meeting that the ordinance would be discussed in our September 12th meeting. On September 6th, it was pulled from the agenda by one council member. For the next couple of days, council members resisted putting it back on the agenda. On September 9th, they finally consented to my request: put it back on the agenda as we told the public it would be.

A second symptom was council's refusal to move the meeting to a location where everyone could not only make a statement to the council if they chose, but they could then be present to see and hear their elected leaders deliberate on the ordinance. Despite my attempts from Monday afternoon through Thursday morning to have the meeting moved, including two straw polls conducted by the mayor's assistant, the other council members and the mayor would not consent to moving the meeting.

A third symptom of the city being a ship without a rudder: no particular person was ever assigned to lead the council through this ordinance. Consequently, there was division and misunderstanding amongst the council as well as in the community. Three days before the vote, Ida said to me, "Boy, we sure messed this up." I say it was messed up because no one was at the helm, and council members were randomly assigned to lead this discussion or that discussion. Ask any council member; there simply was not continuity of leadership on this ordinance. Things spun out of control, not because of massive input from the community, but because the council was unorganized. Our job is to filter out the emotion and get to the nut of the issue at hand as a council, and that takes a steady hand at the helm.

In the end, as I predicted, the two legs of the ordinance did have broad-based support, and they were not overly controversial.

All sides

One very key component of my platform is "accessible and open government." Those who have followed my statements and actions as a member of the City Council know that the importance of this concept is not new to me as I have advocated for more openness and accessibility on numerous occasions, sometimes very publicly. As an extension of this concept to my campaign, I have made myself and my views open to all—to the point where I have placed my cell phone number on several thousand campaign brochures (523-6339). I have always been a big advocate of opening city hall for all residents to speak. If I refuse to listen to one side or the other, I am not doing my job.

Among the hundreds of people on all sides of the ordinance I have met, talked to on the phone, read their emails and read their postcards, I met with Brett Wright. I have known Brett for 15 years or so, and have admired his long and generous service to our community in many ways.

Long before I knew of the postcards, Brett and I sat down to discuss the ordinance at his request. About that time, I also met with four transgender people at their request, and with Pastor Todd Wood at his request, and as with all others, I carefully considered their input. Brett stated his support of the two legs of the ordinance without support of the public accommodations portion, and I said that was essentially the same position I had taken (see Attachment 1). A couple days after our meeting, Brett mailed a donation to my campaign, and I received it in my mailbox several days before the postcards arrived. Hence, I only saw the postcards when everyone else did. The 2nd and 3rd postcards arrived in my home mailbox; we never received the first postcard in our mailbox for some reason. Although this will be on my upcoming campaign reports, I have no qualms in stating that Brett was in general agreement with my basic position, impressed by the extensive research I had done, and contributed to my campaign.

Before the emotionally charged rhetoric emerged these past few weeks, Brett clearly stated to me and to others that he was in favor of the housing and employment legs of the ordinance. His support for the two legs was then overshadowed by the controversy and confusion over the public accommodations leg of the ordinance. From beginning to end, Brett supported the housing and employment portions of the ordinance, as was stated in his remarks at the city council meeting on 9-12-2013, he said, "Let us strike a balance and pass an ordinance that enshrines basic rights of employment and housing for our fellow citizens in the LGBT Community".

As many have noted, it is really a good thing that there was such broad support for the housing and employment legs of the ordinance. As to public accommodations, confusion erupted because it is a complicated issue (see the next section of this paper as to why all sides need to be recognized). The controversy was actually very predictable since Pocatello's public accommodations portion also caused a lot of controversy in their community. Likewise, there is a sizable segment of Idaho Falls who opposed any ordinance at all, including some very influential people from various walks of life. Had those individuals sent postcards, they would surely have opposed passage of any portion of the ordinance.

As I did not receive the first postcard, I cannot speak to it. I did, however, receive the 2nd and 3rd postcards, and while each of those clearly stated: "No to Public Accommodation," at least one postcard said, "All people regardless of race, faith or sexual orientation should have the right to pursue employment and housing of their choice but this ordinance goes way beyond this." Council members received dozens of emails that were obviously prompted by the postcards, encouraging passage of the two legs without the public accommodations legs. Regardless of one's attitude toward the style of the postcards, Brett's efforts both personally and through the postcards moved many people to support the employment and housing legs of the ordinance and nearly removed the controversy over their passage.

In the early August meeting, I referenced "an email that we had received that had some very compelling arguments." That comment referred to Gary Meikle's email which encouraged us to consider the effect the public accommodations portion could have on privacy and religious liberties. Given that I already knew that this was a concern, I mentioned Gary's email because it supported my position. In the long run, Gary's arguments seemed to sway the majority of the council back to my original position.

In Corey Taule's follow up editorial on September 15th (Attachment 6), he states that "... nobody could have foreseen the minor miracle that took place last week. Elected representatives in one of Idaho's most socially and politically conservative cities struck a blow for fairness and equality." Although those who desired an ordinance with a public accommodations leg unlimited by any religious liberties exemptions would have preferred post cards supporting public accommodations, Corey is absolutely correct that the passage of the employment and housing legs of the ordinance, especially with so little controversy, was a minor miracle.

Public Accommodations

I am against the broad and litigious verbiage that the proposed ordinance included. As you probably recognize, this is a developing area of law. The same or similar wording in the Idaho Falls draft ordinance regarding public accommodations is creating a heyday in other states' courts.

A traditional and limited meaning of public accommodations with broad religious exemptions is what I can support. There are 1st Amendment rights that we as city leaders should take into consideration and balance when we are developing public policy; we should not write something into an ordinance that we suspect will be sideways with either the state or U.S. Constitution. Idaho Falls already fought a nonsensical and expensive battle all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in the early 90's, defending an ordinance unrelated to anti-discrimination known as the "Green River Ordinance." The city lost. That ordinance was all the craze, adopted word-for-word in many cities. Again, see my attached 9-5-2013 guest opinion in the Post Register. The point is: as the legislative body for the city we should only put ordinances in place that are legally solid and, where appropriate, are not certain to draw legal challenges.

I have been asked to justify my statement that fighting the Green River Ordinance was futile and expensive from this perspective: “Are human rights to come second to money?” My response is: First Amendment rights should not be the cost of the broad definition of public accommodations in an ordinance. The next section of this white paper makes this case.

The Law School Note

My husband, an attorney (but nonetheless, a nice guy!), was irritated at the numerous Facebook comments that said the issue of “religious liberties” should have no place in the discussion. He found a very good (but long and academic) summary in a *Georgetown Law Journal* Note two days after the council voted on the ordinance. Regardless of how any person, or City Council member, feels personally about the religious liberties guaranteed under the First Amendment protection of the free exercise of religion, this Note shows that religious liberties must be part of the discussion, especially in southeast Idaho:

<http://georgetownlawjournal.org/files/2012/06/Chapman.pdf>. The author acknowledges that all sides need to recognize legitimate concerns from opposing sides.

Written from an LGBT advocate and now-attorney, the Note spells out why there is a notable clash between proponents of religious liberties and proponents of public accommodations—the very same clash that our community has faced. The author's suggestions are enlightening; she strongly suggests that the LGBT population endorse broad religious exemptions in what she terms “holdout states” (and Idaho is a holdout state) and to avoid all-or-nothing stances.

For those truly interested in the issue of how protecting religious liberties should be balanced with the need to protect the LGBT community from discrimination, read the Note. I have attached to this email a pdf of my marked up copy of the Note. NOTE: The author of the Note is in favor of advancing anti-discrimination laws around the nation, and yet her recommendations to the LGBT community are very similar to my approach -- for which certain individuals in the LGBT community have ruthlessly attempted to castigate me. My hope is that we might return to a rationale and civil dialogue that is respectful to both the LGBT community and all who value their religious liberties.

A handful of local LGBT supporters took an all or nothing stance against the Idaho Falls ordinance which is contrary to the author’s main point. This Note essentially backs what I have been promoting as a limited and traditional meaning of public accommodations, but the conservative straights also see promise in my proposal because it protects religious liberties. Who'd have think that there might be so much common ground here in southeast Idaho? And, by the way, wouldn't thoughtful consideration of the religious liberties issue here in Idaho Falls be helpful to our legislators in Boise so as to hopefully have a statewide solution uniquely tailored to Idaho?

Attachment 1

“Taking Time To Get It Right”—September 5, 2013, Post Register Guest Opinion

Taking Time To Get It Right

Idaho Falls will be wrapping up the anti-discrimination ordinance. From the outset, I said the process would be long and complex, and with patience, and perhaps compromise, we could develop a solid ordinance that reflects our diverse community.

It was recently posited that the city council should pass an ordinance to get it on the books, and then let the courts sort it out. While this approach is tempting, we should remember Idaho Falls already learned a hard lesson using this tactic.

In 1990, the City defended its “Green River” door-to-door solicitation ordinance all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the City eventually lost. Many cities adopted Green River ordinances word-for-word. Unfortunately, Idaho Falls drew the short straw and was the unlucky city to be sued. Litigation was very expensive. From the start, it was a questionable ordinance.

We are taking the time necessary to develop a solid anti-discrimination ordinance-- one that is not ripe for litigation and one that balances individual and community interests.

Over the last eight months dozens of people have weighed in on the ordinance. We have listened. Common elements have surfaced:

- Affirm common-sense rights of housing and employment. Everyone deserves the opportunity to provide for themselves: a roof over their head and gainful employment for which they are qualified. A landlord’s home is exempt in the draft ordinance.
- Safeguard the rights of religious organizations and individual religious liberties. Religious institutions and micro-businesses (workplaces with fewer than 5 employees) should be able to hire people whose lives are in harmony with their tenets. These safeguards are in the draft ordinance.
- Utilize only the traditional meaning of public accommodations. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 defines public accommodations: lodging, dining, gas stations, and entertainment venues. Not surprisingly, these make sense to the vast majority. Unfortunately, we got side-tracked by added language: “public washrooms” and “any service sold by any person or establishment to the public.” Restrooms, locker rooms and dressing rooms, as well as businesses that offer services outside of the traditional meaning of public accommodations, were caught in the fray. The simple solution is to keep both phrases out.
- Keep the penalty phase reasonable and sensible. Swaying the pendulum too far either way is rarely helpful. A first-offense infraction is reasonable.
- Some definitions need to be reworked to keep the ordinance balanced.

The City of Idaho Falls has an opportunity to develop an anti-discrimination ordinance that is unique to our city, reflects our own community, and emphasizes respect and kindness rather than merely criminalizing meanness. Ideally, the ordinance will never be needed because common decency will prevail. Regardless, we should take the time to get it right.

Sharon Parry is serving her second term on the Idaho Falls City Council. She can be reached at sdparry@idahofallsidaho.gov or 523-6339.

Attachment 2-- Facebook Post 9-13-2013

The Meeting Should Have Been Moved!

Thank you to all who attended or attempted to attend last night's city council meeting.

Unfortunately, despite my attempts to change the meeting location, neither the mayor nor any of the other city council members were willing. At 7:45 p.m., 15 minutes after the meeting began, 88 people were lined up outside city council chambers. This crowd came as no surprise as we had ample warning that the attendance would be large.

Seven days prior, I suggested the city council meeting be moved to a larger venue. The public needs opportunity to not only address their elected leaders, but to see and hear them at work. I remain baffled why neither the mayor nor any of the other council members were willing to move the meeting, even after being polled twice. By the way, the city's Civic Auditorium remained dark and vacant last night.

One of my four platform points is "Accessible and Open Government." Last night's meeting was a missed opportunity. Under my administration as mayor we will embrace citizen interest and encourage public input.

Attachment 3-- Facebook Post: The Day After the Vote (9-13-2013)

Idaho Falls is a great place to live, and for the most part I was so impressed with the public testimony given at last night's City Council meeting discussing the anti-discrimination ordinance. Except for a few outliers, almost everyone was respectful and made sincere, thoughtful statements. We have a diverse community, with people who are passionate in their beliefs, and we should count that as a blessing. In addition, thank you to those who sent numerous emails with your thoughts. I received well over 200 emails -- again, most of which were very thoughtful.

Last December, I encouraged the City Council to begin discussions on an anti-discrimination ordinance. At that time I stated that we should seek an ordinance that was unique to our community and would receive broad community support. David Adler wrote a very nice opinion piece early in the discussion process that gave kudos to the LDS Church for supporting an ordinance in Salt Lake City that gave protection to the LGBT community for employment and housing. Consequently, when I stated in last night's meeting that I was not initially aware of the public accommodation portion early in the process, it was because the initial discussions focused on the Salt Lake City ordinance which did not contain a public accommodation section. At last night's meeting the vast majority (including those against the public accommodation leg) supported the employment and housing legs of the ordinance and encouraged their adoption.

As I wrote in a guest editorial in the Post Register on September 5, 2013, it was unfortunate that "we got sidetracked by added language: "public washrooms" and "any service sold by any person or establishment to the public." Many in the LGBT community were likewise disappointed that the discussion was sidetracked by the focus on bathrooms.

Rather than abandon the effort entirely or pass the public accommodation portion of the ordinance which was so divisive and clearly would need more work, I voted to pass the ordinance with the protections for employment and housing. These portions of the ordinance received overwhelming public support and were appropriate for passage at this time.

If any of you have specific questions or would like more details, please do not hesitate to contact me. Specifically, there have been several outright lies sent out today about me, some of which are on one of my opponent's FB page, but I trust that you will always check with me first before believing any such gossip.

Attachment 4-- The "Why I Said It" Facebook Post (9-14-2013)

"I Didn't Know It Was in the Ordinance"... WHY I said it

One comment pulled out of context, "I didn't know it was in the ordinance," must be taken in context!

I have been very consistent: promote a neat and clean anti-discrimination ordinance with the housing and employment legs, and either eliminate or work through the public accommodations (PA) portion until it could gain broad community buy in.

In January I said to the LGBT community that I would promote a neat and clean ordinance with housing and employment legs. LGBT activist Theron McGriff is right-- I also did say that I would work toward unanimous support among the council. I believed at the time, and I still believe, that the two legs were not controversial, and unanimous support could be attained.

Then the neat and clean ordinance got side tracked (see my Post Register guest opinion of September 5th). Three months later, in April, I met with our new city attorney and two council members. In that meeting, council members Tom and Karen insisted that the public accommodations portion be included in the first draft because other Idaho cities were including it or had already included it by then. I distinctly said that I was not in favor of including a public accommodations portion written for other cities. I had read many other cities' versions of the PA portion, and I knew it was a quagmire. Anyone who knows me knows I am a stickler for details and doing my homework. Nevertheless, the first draft included PA because two council members outnumbered me.

"I didn't know it was in the ordinance," was said by me Thursday night to Theron McGriff who was sitting on the front row in the audience as my reply to his statement in that same meeting. Yes, I could have been more clear; "I didn't know it was going to be in the ordinance" would have been a more accurate representation of the history. In January, I didn't foresee two council members taking the ordinance on a different path three months later.

In December, when I first asked the council as to whether they were interested in tackling an anti-discrimination ordinance, I developed and distributed my reading list which included web links to other cities' ordinances. Of course I read and re-read each item before I added it to my own reading list. Again, anyone who knows me knows that I do my homework.

City Hall has been rudderless for some time now. Symptomatic of a ship without a rudder, no particular person was assigned to lead the council through this ordinance. Consequently, the lack of leadership resulted in division and misunderstanding in the community. Council President Ida Hardcastle said to me on the phone three days before the meeting, "Boy, we sure messed this up." If there had been clear leadership on this ordinance, it wouldn't have been messed up.

As I predicted in January, the two legs of the ordinance did have broad-based support, and they were not controversial.

Attachment 5-- Sharon's Reading List

Reading List

Potential Anti-Bias Ordinance or Resolution in City of Idaho Falls

Re: Federal Employment Law Federal law does not currently prohibit discrimination in employment matters against individuals because of sexual orientation <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html>

Re: Federal Housing Law Federal law does not currently prohibit discrimination against individuals in housing matters because of sexual orientation http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/LGBT_Housing_Discrimination

Re: Idaho Employment Law Idaho law does not currently prohibit discrimination against individuals in employment matters because of sexual orientation; 2012 Legislative session <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2012/feb/10/idaho-rejects-anti-discrimination-law-gays/>

Re: Idaho Housing Law Idaho law does not currently prohibit discrimination against individuals in housing matters because of sexual orientation <http://www.civilrights.org/fairhousing/laws/state-laws.html>

Re: Salt Lake City, Utah, passed November 2009

[Unlawful Discrimination in Housing Practices Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

[Unlawful Discrimination in Employment Practices Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#) at <http://www.slcclassic.com/ndo/default.htm>

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_13758070

www.mormonnewsroom.org search "nondiscrimination"; includes a statement by Michael Otterson to the Salt City Council at <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/statement-given-to-salt-lake-city-council-on-nondiscrimination-ordinances>

Re: Sandpoint, Idaho, passed December 2011

http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=437 (click on blue square right arrow to go to next page)

http://www.bonnercountydailybee.com/news/local/article_c0896910-4360-11e2-b98c-0019bb2963f4.html

Re: Boise, Idaho, ordinance passed 12-4-2012

http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2012/12/05/krichert/boises_city_council_goes_where_idahos_legislature_wont

<http://gaysaltlake.com/2012/12/05/boise-city-council-unanimously-passes-anti-bias-ordinance/>

Re: Ketchum, Idaho, 1st reading of ordinance 12-3-2012

<http://www.mtexpress.com/index2.php?ID=2005145100#.UMp-nqzL5ZI>

Pocatello, Idaho considering ordinance in September 2012

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=160999831>

Re: Idaho Falls, Idaho

www.postregister.com

November 16, 2012. Corey Taule editorial

December 13, 2012. Dr. David Adler guest editorial piece, p. A4; article by Clark Corbin regarding Idaho Falls City Council work session agenda item, p. A1

December 16, 2012. Corey Taule editorial piece, p. A6

February 9, 2013. Article regarding LDS Church working with groups to hammer out Add-Words-type state legislation.

Attachment 6-- Post Register: OUR VIEW Reason to celebrate

Printed on: September 15, 2013

Eleven years ago, a local judge allowed a gay Idaho Falls man to see his children on one condition: that his male partner move out of the home they shared.

Seven years ago, the Idaho Legislature voted to "protect" marriage by defining it in the State Constitution as an institution to be experienced exclusively by "one man and one woman." No eastern Idaho legislator opposed the idea, which was supported overwhelmingly by their constituents at the ballot box.

Look how far we've come.

Just after the stroke of midnight Friday, Idaho Falls Mayor Jared Fuhrman broke a 3-3 City Council tie and granted our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community a security it has never known.

No longer does a gay man need to worry about being evicted from his apartment because his roommate is really his partner. Never again will a lesbian be forced to live in fear of losing her job because of who she goes home to at night.

Turn that faux bedroom into a computer room or load it with exercise equipment. Proudly put those pictures of your family on the desk at work for all to see.

A new day has arrived.

No, Idaho Falls did not go as far as the six other Idaho cities that have passed anti-discrimination ordinances. Sandpoint, Boise, Ketchum, Coeur d'Alene, Moscow and Pocatello provided protections in the area of public accommodations.

Idaho Falls, its citizens and policymakers, were not prepared to take that step, a bitter pill for many who showed up at City Hall on Thursday.

Many of those folks expressed a desire for all or nothing. It's likely they view the council's action as regrettable and a rejection of them personally; the glass half empty.

We believe the opposite. When Theron McGriff was being discriminated against by the court system and lawmakers were enshrining bigotry in the Constitution, nobody could have foreseen the minor miracle that took place last week. Elected representatives in one of Idaho's most socially and politically conservative cities struck a blow for fairness and equality.

Even that 3-3 vote was misleading. Two council members, Karen Cornwell and Tom Hally, voted "No" because they wanted public accommodations protections; the third "No" vote, cast by the council's technician, Mike Lehto, appeared more about crossing T's and dotting I's than the issue itself.

This glass is definitely half full.

Today we celebrate. Through its elected representatives, the citizens of Idaho Falls righted a great wrong. Nobody should lose a job or a roof over their head because of who they are. Our law now enforces that ideal.

Tomorrow, however, we get back to work. What took place this week was a historic first step, another sign that even in our little corner of the world change is rapidly occurring. Think of where we were a decade ago and take heart. It won't be long. We will complete this journey. ---- Corey Taule