

City of Pittsburgh Joins Worldwide Commemoration of 75th International Human Rights Day

Announcing Initiatives to Advance the Human Right to Housing in Pittsburgh

WHAT: The City of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office, the Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance, and City Council, will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

WHEN: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 9:00 AM

WHO: City of Pittsburgh IDEA Manager, Dr. Ameela Boyd, Executive Advisor on Legal Policy Zeke Rediker, Commission on Human Relations Executive Director Rachel Shepherd, Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance Co-Coordinator Jackie Smith, Councilwoman Erika Strassburger, Rev. Libby Barlow, Chair, City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations.

WHERE: Outside City Council Chambers (City-County Building, 5th Floor, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219)

WHY: The new Office of Equal Protection aims to strengthen the enforcement of existing human rights protections and to make human rights central to City policy and planning, and City Council has advanced numerous efforts to protect residents' right to housing. Enforcement of human rights policies is key to creating a true impact.

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PITTSBURGH — The City of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance, the Mayor's Office, and City Council members will commemorate *International Human Rights Day*, the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

International Human Rights Day is an opportunity to honor those who have helped advance and defend rights that so many now take for granted, such as freedom from slavery and arbitrary detention, voting rights, and rights to basic human needs. It is also a time to recommit to closing the gap between the ideals set out by authors of the UDHR 75 years ago and the harsh realities that too many people in our community now face.

According to international law, having a place to live is a fundamental right, yet we are seeing an increase in people being denied this right. Today, a growing number of Pittsburgh residents face housing insecurity, which leads to increased homelessness or residents being pushed out of the city due to rising housing costs.

The vibrancy and diversity of our city depend on efforts to ensure that all residents have access to housing and safe, stable communities. Pittsburgh advocates and elected officials are committed to protecting and fulfilling the right to housing for all Pittsburghers, and to remedying long-standing racial discrimination in housing policies. The Gainey Administration and City Council leaders have come together with advocates to create new mechanisms to defend and protect human rights for all residents of our city, and today we highlight several of these initiatives.

In response to growing needs, City leaders have put forward initiatives to ensure housing rights and freedom from discrimination, including additional protections for survivors of domestic violence and predatory real estate practices. The Office of Equal Protection aims to strengthen the enforcement of existing human rights protections and to make human rights central to City policy and planning. Enforcement of human rights policies is key to creating a true impact.

The right to housing and other basic needs are essential to making our city livable for all residents. Housing insecurity of any of our neighbors affects the character of our community and the future of the City upon which we all depend. Recognizing that Pittsburgh became the 5th U.S. Human Rights City in 2011, we come together to recommit ourselves to making human rights real in the lives of *all residents* and to making Pittsburgh and the surrounding region a place where everyone can thrive.