

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

**City of Pittsburgh Joins Worldwide Commemoration
of 75th International Human Rights Day
*Announcing Initiatives to Advance the Human Right to Housing in Pittsburgh***

For immediate release: December 8, 2023

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Pittsburgh (PA) - The City of Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations (PghCHR) in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance, the Mayor's Office, and City Council members will hold a press conference to commemorate *International Human Rights Day*, the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The press conference will take place on **Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 9:00 AM** outside council chambers on the 5th floor of the City-County Building, 414 Grant Street.

This week we join people around the world to commemorate International Human Rights Day. This is a time to honor those who 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 ourselves to the work of closing the gap between the ideals set out by authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights three quarters of a century ago and the realities that too many people in our community now face.

The right to a place to live is one of the most fundamental rights of all. It is part of international law and binding on governments everywhere. Yet more and more people are being denied this right. Today in Pittsburgh growing numbers of residents face housing insecurity. Many are unhoused or are being pushed out of our city by rising housing costs.

The vibrancy and diversity of our city depend upon efforts to ensure that all residents have access to decent housing and safe, stable communities. This requires protections of the right to housing and freedom from all forms of discrimination. Pittsburgh advocates and elected officials are committed to doing more to protect and fulfill the right to housing for all Pittsburghers, and to remedy long-standing racial discrimination in housing policies. Mayor Gainey's office 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 new Office of Equal Protection aims to strengthen enforcement of existing human rights protections and to make human rights central to City policy and planning. Enforcement of human rights policies is key in creating 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 all of us 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.

Confirmed Speakers: Council member Deb Gross; Council member Ericka Strassburger; Dr. Ameela Boyd, City of Pittsburgh IDEA manager; Zeke Redicker, Mayor's Office of Equal Protection

(Emcees) Rachel Shepherd, Executive Director, Commission on Human Relations; Jackie Smith, Co-coordinator, Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance