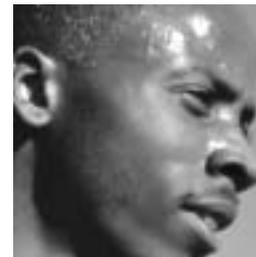
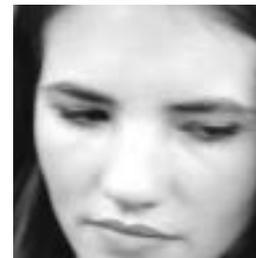




People



A SPECIAL REPORT
ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Prepared by the

D·U·B·U·Q·U·E

HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

D·U·B·U·Q·U·E

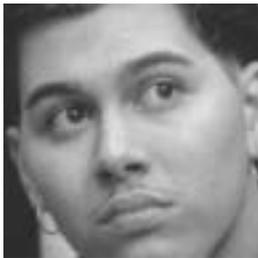
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

*This booklet was paid for by
Parents, Family and Friends of Gays and Lesbians (PFLAG), Tri-State Chapter
and printed by Dubuque Community Schools Print Center*



We
All
Know

March 2004



Mission Statement

The Human Rights Commission shall work to eliminate discrimination and promote the quality of life for every resident in the City of Dubuque.

The Human Rights Commission's mandate is to eliminate discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, credit and education on the basis of age, race, sex, disability, creed, color, national origin, religion, and familial status, or marital status (in credit only).

Goals

DUBUQUE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION GOAL 2003-2004

“Educate the community about sexual orientation for the purpose of inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected class in the city ordinance.”

SEXUAL ORIENTATION SUBCOMMITTEE GOAL November, 2003

“Educate the community regarding sexual orientation for the purpose of persuading the Dubuque City Council to include sexual orientation in the city's nondiscrimination policy.”

For further information, please contact the Dubuque Human Rights Commission
City Hall Annex, 1300 Main Street, (563) 589-4140
E-mail: humanrgt@cityofdubuque.org
Revised June 2004.

People We All Know

A SPECIAL REPORT ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

*Prepared by the Dubuque Human Rights Commission
and the Sexual Orientation Subcommittee*

Introduction

Discrimination against anyone harms everyone. Whether it is sexual harassment on the job, ethnic jokes or innuendoes, or inadequate public accommodations for disabled persons, discriminatory practices create hostile environments in workplaces, classrooms, and neighborhoods.

A person's sexual orientation can be the basis of discriminatory acts. At one extreme, gays and lesbians can be the victims of serious hate crimes, sometimes resulting in physical injury or death, as in the death of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming a few years ago. More often, gays and lesbians experience overt or subtle discrimination in housing, credit, employment, education, and public accommodation. One example of this discrimination took place in 1998 in Davenport, Iowa, when two men were fired from a nursing care facility because their employer perceived them as gay. These men had no recourse, either through city ordinance or state ordinance, since an ordinance regarding sexual orientation as a protected class in that city didn't exist at that time. Davenport is now one of five cities in the state of Iowa with an ordinance that assures protection for homosexuals in employment, housing, public accommodation, education and credit. The other cities are Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Ames and Iowa City. There is no state ordinance protecting homosexuals from discrimination.

Hiring skilled and talented workers, regardless of their race, gender, religion or sexual orientation, is key to a healthy Dubuque economy. Workers of all ages and skills are very much in demand to "come back to Dubuque" or "come to Dubuque." Unfortunately, many creative, talented and hardworking individuals who are gay and lesbian have left Dubuque in recent years because of nonacceptance, fears, and perceptions that the atmosphere in the city is inhospitable to them as individuals and as citizens.

Dubuque has changed in many exciting ways. From the beauty of the bluffs to the new and vibrant river front development, from the long-range downtown plan of historic preservation to a plethora of cultural amenities, the mood in the city is upbeat and positive. Dubuquers can't imagine turning back the clock to the more dreary days of the 70s and 80s, when the economy was struggling, employees were seeking jobs elsewhere, and the atmosphere was inhospitable to people of other races and creeds.

Today, change is all around us. We note people of many backgrounds and welcome these newcomers. As we give ourselves good marks in our growth as a hospitable city, we also look for ways to grow into a progressive twenty-first century. One way to assure this growth is to see that all citizens are treated fairly, with equal protection and acceptance under the law.

We, the Human Rights Commission and the Sexual Orientation Subcommittee of the Human Rights Commission, believe that the gay and lesbian community deserves equal protection. We therefore propose a change in the Dubuque city ordinance to include "sexual orientation" as a protected class in employment, housing, credit, education and public accommodation. No longer do we wish to see our sons, daughters, neighbors, co-workers, nieces, nephews, parishioners and classmates decide to move to Iowa City, Chicago, Des Moines or Minneapolis because they experience more acceptance there. We want to keep our friends, neighbors and children here to work, to prosper, and to add to the well-being of our city.

We of the Human Rights Commission and Subcommittee have heard the concerns from gays and lesbians experiencing discrimination. Our relatives and friends who are gay know that they have no protection from harassment or crimes or even hurtful remarks. They notice that both locally and nationally, there is continued intolerance and violence towards gay and lesbian people. Many have said that they are fearful of coming forward to support an ordinance amendment because they would be identifying themselves for further discrimination if the amendment to the ordinance failed to pass. **These citizens say that the city is losing talent because gay and lesbian college graduates, many native to Dubuque, are choosing to leave Dubuque due to the likelihood of experiencing discrimination without recourse under the law.**

Behaviors that humiliate, exclude, or deny opportunity to gay and lesbian people are simply unacceptable. Therefore, we present this report outlining our conviction that adding "sexual orientation" to the city ordinance is the right thing to do to maintain and enhance the all-inclusive title given to our city during the past decade: "Dubuque, Everyone's Neighborhood."

Sources and Bibliography

American Psychological Association paper "Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality."

Paper can be found: www.apa.org; click "sexual orientation search"
American Psychological Association
Office of Public Affairs
750 First St. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002-4242
202-336-5700

Seminar: "Risk and Resiliency: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Youth,"
December 4, 2002, Madison WI

Contact:
Gary Hollander, PhD, Executive Director
Diverse & Resilient
315 W. Court St., Suite 101
Milwaukee, Wis., 53212
414-390-0444

Iowa Hate Crimes Statistics:

Iowa Uniform Crime Reporting Annual Report (1995-2002)
Division of Administrative Services
Iowa Department of Public Safety
www.dps.state.ia.us/asd

Federal Hate Crime Statistics

Uniform Crime Reports: Hate Crime Statistics
U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
www.fbi.gov

National Center for Human Rights: Southern Poverty Law Center

Intelligence Project
www.splcenter.org/intel/intpro.jsp

For local information: Dubuque Human Rights Commission

City Hall Annex
13th and Main St.
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
563- 589-4190

Local GLBT support group: Parents Family Friends of Gays and Lesbians (PFLAG)

PFLAG Dubuque/Tri-Chapter
PO Box 524
Dubuque, IA 52004-0524
Contact: Cathy and Roger, 563-562-2296
National website: www.pflag.org

Conclusion

For the same reasons that people whose race, age, marital status, disability, ethnic origin, creed or gender put them at risk of being discriminated against, people who identify as other than heterosexual should be protected as well. When even one or two people feel that they have been discriminated against, society as a whole is adversely affected. In order to ensure that every citizen is included in full human rights, we urge the City Council to say “yes” to adding sexual orientation as a protected class to the city ordinance of Dubuque.

MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Judy Haley Giesen	Evelyn Jackson
Sister Corine Murray, PBVM	Lou Oswald
Sarah Davidson,	Bill Ross
Penny Ehlinger	Vince VandenHeuvel
Patricia Foster	

MEMBERS OF THE SEXUAL ORIENTATION SUBCOMMITTEE “PEOPLE WE ALL KNOW”

Rev. Nancy Bickel, Minister of Church Life, First Congregational Church
Mike Coty, Bluff Street Neighborhood President, Historic Preservation
Committee, Dubuque Regional AIDS Coalition, Tri-Pride
Sister Jordan Dahm, OSF, Mount St. Francis
Thom Determan, former Equity Director, Dubuque Community Schools,
teacher and lecturer
Dr. Robert Dunn, Professor of Psychology, Loras College
Cathy Elwell, former high school teacher and Gay Straight Alliance adviser
Dr. Kris Hall, Executive Director of Equity Operations and School
Services, Dubuque Community Schools
Kevin Menning, owner of “One Flite Up” Lounge
Fr. Tom Rhomberg, priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque
Sid Scott, Vice President of Human Resources, Woodward
Communications, Inc.
Rev. Dr. Gwen Saylor, Wartburg Theological Seminary
Laura Lawrence, counselor and Gay Straight Alliance adviser, Dubuque
Senior High School
Tara E. Nelson, social work, Class of 2004
Terri Murphy, R.N.
Vince VandenHeuvel, Dubuque Human Rights Commission
Judy Haley Giesen, Dubuque Human Rights Commission
Bill Ross, Dubuque Human Rights Commission

History

HISTORY OF A HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE REGARDING SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN DUBUQUE

1988 Human Rights Commission passes the proposal for sexual orientation to become a protected class in Dubuque.

Issue is considered at the City Council meeting at a “public hearing,” allowing citizens to give input. Council rejects the ordinance 4-3.

1999 Members of the gay and lesbian community ask the Human Rights Commission to study the issue of sexual orientation. On July 19, 1999, the Commission votes 9-0 to take the measure to the City Council for approval to change the city ordinance to include sexual orientation as a protected class in employment, public accommodation, education, housing and credit.

August 16: City Council rejects amendment proposed by Human Rights to approve sexual orientation as a protected class, 5-2.

Gay and lesbian community and allies, “Dubuquers Against Discrimination” protest for several months outside the Carnegie Stout Public Library requesting that the council reconsider its vote.

2001 February 16, 2001, Dubuque Community School Board votes 6-1 to amend its nondiscrimination/anti-harassment policy to include sexual orientation and physical attributes.

2003–Present At goal-setting session in August, 2003, the Human Rights Commission adopts the following goal for 2003-2004: “Educate the community about sexual orientation with the purpose of inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected class in the city ordinance.” Subcommittee of 12 Dubuque citizens, along with three commissioners, begin work to change the ordinance.

we began attempting to track these calls, we received two phone calls where the individual indicated s/he believed s/he was being discriminated against based on sexual orientation.”

- 13. How many complaints have come in to the cities that have changed their ordinance to protect gays and lesbians from harassment and discrimination?**

STATISTICS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION CHARGES

	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL
Des Moines	0	3	25	28
Cedar Rapids	9	2	1	12
Ames	0	1	0	1
Iowa City	0	7	2	9
Davenport	5	5	Unavailable	10

- 14. Are there other cities in the U.S., similar to Dubuque, that have adopted nondiscrimination policies regarding sexual orientation?**

There are 44 cities outside of Iowa with similar demographics (i.e. population 30,000–75,000) which have adopted ordinances protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination. These include Charlottesville, Va., Covington, Ky., Moorhead Minn., Olympia, Wash., Normal, Ill., Portland, Maine, Sarasota Fla., York, Penn., Las Cruces, N.M., Bloomington, Ill. and Somerville, Mass.

The five Iowa cities — large and small — with nondiscrimination policies are Des Moines, Davenport, Iowa City, Ames and Cedar Rapids.

- 15. What can be done to overcome the prejudice and discrimination that the gay and lesbian community experiences?**

It’s been said that all humanity knows each other through six other people.

The best way to reduce prejudice and discrimination is to reach out and really get to know “people we all know.” Some of our relatives, friends, neighbors and colleagues at work are gay and lesbian. Our personal language, body language and treatment of “people we all know” speak volumes and will be copied by those who respect us: our children, our relatives, our out-of-state friends, etc. Personal experiences and friendships are key to understanding, and key to a hospitable and inclusive community.

10. Have Dubuque schools or colleges instituted policies ensuring safe schools and protecting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students?

Yes. The University of Dubuque has a nondiscrimination policy that protects gay and lesbian students as does the Dubuque Community Schools, adopted by the Dubuque School Board in Feb., 2001.

The Dubuque Community School Policy # 1001: "Any form of discrimination or harassment can be devastating to an individual's academic progress, social relationships and sense of self-worth. Therefore, the Dubuque Community School District will not tolerate discrimination or harassment in its educational program on the basis of a person's protected status, such as age, color, creed, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, physical attributes, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status."

Furthermore, the School Administrators of Iowa say: "The most effective way for school districts to ensure that they fulfill their legal obligations and at the same time protect students from harassment and discrimination is to adopt and implement a policy that clearly prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation."

11. If gays and lesbians get their rights in education and employment, will religious institutions be obligated to hire them if they're openly gay?

The policy-making body (such as the City of Dubuque) that drafts a proposed law or ordinance decides whether or not to include an exemption for religious institutions. Three Iowa cities that have passed ordinances to include sexual orientation in their discrimination policies (Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Ames) did not contain an exemption for religious institutions.

The most recent draft of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the proposed federal law, does contain an exemption for religious institutions.

12. How many complaints come in to the Dubuque Human Rights Office (which doesn't have an ordinance) every year?

Human Rights Director, Kelly Larson says: "The Dubuque Human Rights Office has only recently begun tracking intakes where sexual orientation discrimination is alleged. We have not historically tracked those numbers because it is not within our jurisdiction to accept a complaint alleging sexual orientation discrimination. In 2003, the first year

Definition

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE ACRONYM GLBTQ

Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction to another person. **Gender identity** is the psychological sense of being male or female.

The acronym, **GLBTQ** stands for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered or Questioning individuals.

- **Gay:** A male whose primary sexual and romantic attraction is to other males.
- **Lesbian:** A female whose primary sexual and romantic attraction is to other females.
- **Bisexual:** Bisexual men and women who have sexual and romantic attraction to both men and women.
- **Transgendered:** People who identify more strongly with the other gender than the one to which they were assigned (e.g., women who feel like men or men who feel like women).
- **Questioning:** A person who questions his or her orientation or gender (see transgender).*

SOURCE

GLBT definitions modified from web site: <http://www.metroke.gov/health/glbtc/definitions.htm>

* Seminar: *Risk and Resiliency: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Youth*, December 4, 2002, Madison WI

Hate Crimes

GAYS AND LESBIANS: VICTIMS OF HATE CRIMES IN IOWA AND IN THE NATION

Hate crimes are acts committed for the express purpose of lashing out against a member of a racial minority, a person with a disability, a person possessing a specific religious affiliation, or a person who is gay or lesbian.

Statistics of hate crimes can be tracked on both a state and a national level. Prosecution of hate crimes depends on:

- a. The victim reporting the crime to law enforcement.
- b. The investigating law enforcement agency labeling the crime a hate crime after determining that there is sufficient evidence to show the crime was motivated by bias.

Local law enforcement agencies must submit their hate crime statistics to the state or federal agency that is compiling the Uniform Crime Report.

Nationally, hate crimes based on sexual orientation constitute the third most frequent type of hate crime, preceded by religion and race. With the exception of 2001, hate crimes based on ethnicity occurred less frequently than hate crimes based on sexual orientation. Specific examples of incidents can be obtained through local police agencies, state departments of law enforcement, or the U.S. Department of Justice.

Hate Crimes in Iowa

The Iowa Department of Public Safety publishes a Uniform Crime Reporting Annual Report. These annual reports are currently available at www.dps.state.ia.us/asd for the years 1995-2002. Below are the statistics of incidents against the GLBT population in Iowa from 1995 until 2002:

IOWA			
YEAR	SEXUALLY ORIENTED INCIDENTS	TOTAL INCIDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
2002	7	48	15%
2001	2	36	1%
2000	6	33	18%
1999	4	32	13%
1998	7	42	17%
1997	10	57	18%
1996	1	56	2%
1995	1	45	2%

gay and lesbian community and the companies seeking a presence in Dubuque.

Today's leading author on the gay and lesbian community is Richard Florida. In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, he says that one-third of the workers in society are "creative" workers, including artists, researchers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, programmers and artisans.

It is in Dubuque's economic interest to be hospitable to current residents who are gay and lesbian by creating a welcoming atmosphere here. We can't afford to waste *any* talent. We can't economically afford to see gays and lesbians leave our city to settle in more tolerant and accepting cities and towns.

In an article in the March 12, 2004, Wall Street Journal, the gay and lesbian community is cited as having substantive buying power in communities across the country. The Journal cited an example of the travel habits of this population as researched by Witeck-Combs Communication, a Washington, D.C.-based firm which specializes in researching the gay and lesbian consumer market. In the tourist industry (American Airlines, etc.) overall gay buying power was pegged at \$485 billion for 2003. This tourism buying power is an economic selling point for welcoming gays and lesbians to Dubuque.

All in all, we want to demonstrate that GLBTQ people feel safe, welcome and wholeheartedly accepted in Dubuque, not only as tourists, but also as long-term residents.

9. Is there an example of a major company in Dubuque which has a nondiscrimination policy which includes sexual orientation?

Here is a statement regarding the policy of John Deere & Company from Chairman and CEO Robert W. Lane:

"Diversity goes beyond simple demographics.

"Although diversity is commonly understood as the gender and racial makeup of a company's workforce, in our view, it goes far beyond such narrow boundaries. At Deere & Company, diversity encompasses all the characteristics that make us unique as individuals. To this end, race, gender, sexual orientation, geographic background, culture, age, disability, economic status and religious beliefs are just some of the characteristics that define our employees and other stakeholders. Deere is committed to practices that promote diversity in the broadest possible sense."

affirmative action, which is a distinct legal concept. The laws that prohibit discrimination are designed to ensure that decisions are made based on criteria relevant to an individual's qualifications, rather than on assumptions and stereotypes derived from personal characteristics.

If sexual orientation was added to the City of Dubuque ordinance, the protection would apply to everyone. For example, if discrimination based on sexual orientation was prohibited and an employer provided preferential treatment to people who were gay, a heterosexual could file a claim of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

7. If we pass the sexual orientation ordinance in Dubuque, won't that open the door for any group to come forward to say that they don't have rights to education, employment, credit, public accommodation and housing?

Where else would we find any group that is so consistently discriminated against and who would be demanding ordinance changes regarding rights? We see listing sexual orientation in the human rights code of the city is the final step for rights in our city.

The current "protected classes" receiving protection under the law in Dubuque are race, creed, color, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, sex, religion, familial status and marital status (credit only). But if someone is discriminated against because he or she is gay, he/she has no recourse for basic rights violations through the city ordinance. And we know that gays and lesbians — estimated to be 5-10% of the population — have none of these basic rights in Dubuque.

If it were to become apparent in the future that a class of people was being subjected to significant discrimination based on some other immutable characteristic not mentioned above, wouldn't we want to eradicate that too? The whole idea is that decisions regarding employment, education, credit, public accommodation and housing should be based on objective, not subjective, criteria. It is for this sole purpose that a nondiscrimination policy exists in the first place.

8. Would a change in the ordinance be good for business and the overall economic well-being of Dubuque?

In recent years, Dubuque has sought to be a modern, creative city which seeks new businesses and new economic opportunities. We have prided ourselves on being open to everyone to share their economic gifts, their creativity and their resources. Dubuque seeks both creative workers and progressive companies. An ordinance which includes sexual orientation as a protected class would create a win/win situation for both the

Hate Crimes in the United States:

The Federal Bureau of Investigation publishes Hate Crime Statistics as part of its annual Uniform Crime Report. These annual reports are currently available at www.fbi.gov/ucr for the years 1995-2002 and are summarized below:

UNITED STATES			
YEAR	SEXUALLY ORIENTED INCIDENTS	TOTAL INCIDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
2002	1,244	7,462	17%
2001	1,393	9,730	14%
2000	1,299	8,063	16%
1999	1,317	7,876	17%
1998	1,260	7,755	16%
1997	1,102	8,049	14%
1996	1,016	8,759	12%
1995	1,019	7,947	13%

Our Community Speaks Out

THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY SPEAKS OUT . . .

Adolescence is a time both for self-discovery and the continuation of nurturance from earlier childhood. As a self-aware gay adolescent it felt very unsafe for me to honor or act on deeply felt feelings when no clear messages of acceptance were heard in any of the important groups providing nurturing during my adolescence including school, church, Boy Scouts or family. For my own development, and even survival, I had to leave Dubuque in order to find myself in a safe place and [in a] self-honored way.

David Ross, Boston, Mass.

A sudden change of plans at the time of my graduation from Iowa State University brought me back to Dubuque, and I must admit I had my reservations about returning to my hometown. One of the most serious issues I find is an atmosphere of silent discrimination or disapproval with a number of minority groups. One would rarely find him/herself being openly insulted or abused here. Perhaps a key issue is the unwillingness or lack of desire for any change . . .

I think [that] if the measure being sought in Dubuque is passed, perhaps people will feel more comfortable about themselves and they will be more open with co-workers and the community in general, and this in turn will help those who have little experience with homosexuals.

Ben Burke, Dubuque

We are a same-sex couple living in the Dubuque area. We have chosen not to come out publicly. One reason [is] fear for our physical safety. It is not unrealistic that people who see us as different may want to harm us. When we are in public, we proceed with caution so we don't do anything that would suggest we are a couple.

Another reason we are not "out" is because we have concerns about our jobs and the security of those jobs. Our employers could decide to let us go at any time, even though we may be excellent employees. Sadly, we would have no recourse. [Meantime] we refrain from sharing events of our week-

filed. Gay and lesbian citizens know this, and when suffering discrimination in housing, employment, credit, and public accommodation, they know they must either keep quiet in their workplaces or in their apartments, or move away.

This report, produced by the Human Rights Commission, provides anecdotal evidence that there is exclusion, diminution or loss of opportunities for the GLBT population. We see that there really IS a problem of overt or covert discrimination.

Even though there is no recourse for complaints of discrimination, the Human Rights Office has been keeping track of calls regarding sexual orientation for the past two years. Two phone calls alleging discrimination in employment, etc., have been received. The office has had to tell these individuals that they have no rights in the specified categories, and the office couldn't begin an investigation of the complaint.

Perhaps an analogy is appropriate here. Every home and business should have smoke alarms and fire extinguishers to protect against a fire that may never happen. An ordinance which proactively protects every citizen from discrimination signifies an inclusive, fair, and hospitable city, ready to respond to any incident, even if one never happens. This ordinance change should be adopted in case other discriminative acts are reported, which is likely once the community knows that there is an ordinance.

5. By changing the city ordinance to include gays and lesbians as a protected class, are we endorsing the "gay lifestyle"?

First, there is no more a "gay lifestyle" than there is a "straight lifestyle." Instead, we need to ask the question, "Does everyone, gay and straight, have the rights due them in life?"

Rights in employment, education, public accommodation, credit and housing have to do with dignity in everyday living, in the grocery store, in the workplace, and in the classroom. Being gay has no impact on these venues, anymore than being straight does. An excellent employee is either gay or straight.

Personal lives outside the workplace or school are private matters for both gay and straight. No one has a right to question or invade a citizen's private domain.

6. Aren't gays and lesbians asking for special rights, not human rights?

The laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and credit require *equal* treatment, not *special* treatment, of people. These laws should not be confused with

2. Do current Iowa hate crime laws and the U.S. Constitution protect homosexuals from discriminatory/criminal actions?

The hate crime law in Iowa provides for higher penalties for crimes of assault, arson, criminal mischief and trespass when there is evidence that the crime was motivated by bias against the victim because of the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation. This law applies only to these criminal acts. The Iowa hate crime laws do not make it illegal to discriminate against someone in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, or credit.

In general, neither the United States Constitution nor the Constitution of the State of Iowa prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, education or credit, unless the claim is against a governmental entity. Legislative acts, such as city ordinances and state laws, not constitutions, govern these areas.

3. What would the city ordinance look like with the addition of sexual orientation to the code?

The section of the city code relating to human rights has several areas which discuss protection afforded protected classes in the categories of housing, education, employment, public accommodation and credit. In sections where the protected classes are listed, "sexual orientation" would be added.

For example, in the section listing employment laws, one of the paragraphs in the ordinance would read:

"It shall be an unfair or discriminatory practice for any person to refuse to hire, accept, register, classify or refer for employment, to discharge any employee, or to otherwise discriminate in employment against any applicant for employment or any employee because of the race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, religion or *sexual orientation* of such applicant or employee, unless based upon the nature of the occupation."

4. Is there REALLY a problem in Dubuque necessitating changing the ordinance?

Of course there is. But first, let us say that this whole question of a "real problem" is a Catch-22.

Because there is no provision in the city ordinance to acknowledge and investigate sexual orientation complaints, no complaints can be

end with co-workers for fear of raising suspicions about our relationship. We cringe in silence when tasteless jokes are told. We make choices daily as to what we share and what we keep to ourselves for the sake of job security.

We have many dreams! We dream of introducing the other as "partner" with confidence. We dream of celebrating an anniversary in public without fearing for our safety. We dream of sharing more honestly in conversations in our workplace. We dream of meeting others more easily who share the same struggles and joys. We dream of being seen as equals in our society.

Anonymous same-sex couple in Dubuque

I was in the fifth grade . . . when the harassments started, both verbally and physically. Kids would say things like "look at the fagot," or "queer-boy." That's when I learned to hate school . . . the teachers never did much of anything to solve the matter . . .

When I finally graduated from high school, I said, "Thank God the harassments and assaults won't happen again." The assaults don't happen, but the verbal harassments still take place in the work force. I have witnessed and experienced them myself. Sometimes the spoken word hurts more than the physical abuse.

Dennis from Dubuque

I am originally from Chicago and have lived in Dallas, Texas and Miami, Florida. I have been a resident of Dubuque for nearly four years. I currently serve as President of the Bluff Street Neighborhood Association, as a board member of the Historic Preservation Commission, and as Treasurer for the Dubuque Regional AIDS Coalition. I am also HIV positive, and I am GAY.

The first question I am always asked by people of Dubuque, when I tell them I moved here from Chicago, is, "WHY?" In response, I usually smile and say, "Compared to Chicago, the cost of living here is much cheaper." And for the most part, that was my motivation.

I certainly didn't move here because I had heard that Dubuque had a reputation for being open-minded or liberal; certainly not because I had heard from others that an openly gay person with AIDS would be welcomed by the community.

Since I have been here, I have heard about and witnessed discrimination against gay people. I know individuals who have been fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation, and I am aware of many who have experienced verbal attacks for the same reason. There are businesses in Dubuque that I no longer patronize because of their openly anti-gay senti-

ments. There are areas of Dubuque that I do not travel through because I don't want to risk a physical confrontation.

Overall, I am extremely happy in Dubuque and certainly call it my home. That is why I have chosen to participate in this community in as many ways as possible. I do not feel it is appropriate to be critical of the problems without being willing to be part of the solutions.

There are national and international companies with offices in Dubuque who have nondiscrimination policies that include stated protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. These companies are very successful and have not suffered because of their corporate policies. In fact, by ensuring that everyone is treated equitably, they have created climates of safety and trust which encourage creativity and growth.

As I continue to be involved with various organizations in Dubuque, it is my hope that those who have questions regarding sexual orientation or are uncertain about what adding "sexual orientation" to Dubuque's existing nondiscrimination code would accomplish, will take the time to ask. There is much to be gained from open dialogue, and nothing to be lost.

Michael Coty, Dubuque

Students and members of society don't realize that name-calling can follow a homosexual youth over a great amount of time. My gay friends and I have been lucky to never have been physically harassed, although the verbal harassment is heard every day. I am always worrying about the safety and welfare of all of my friends, but I worry about my gay friends more since they have to deal with that added hatred . . . I would like to feel safe on our streets, at work, and in school.

Gay student in a Dubuque high school

I have had amazing experiences in Dubuque, and I have had experiences that I would like to forget. The fact that homosexual rights is a leading topic, not only in our country, but in the city of Dubuque, gives me hope. I just want to live like a normal human being.

Homosexuals must be protected now! We are just like everyone else. Just because we love and are attracted to the same gender, doesn't mean anything. We are not a threat. We are a misunderstood minority that must be understood soon. Dubuque cannot go on avoiding this topic because many homosexuals live here and feel threatened. As a resident of Dubuque, I am looking forward to the day when I am accepted into an understanding society.

Lesbian student in a Dubuque high school

Q & A

1. What is the gay population in Dubuque? What is the gay population in the United States?

For years, sociologists and psychologists have estimated the count of gays and lesbians (GLBT) in the United States to be between two percent and ten percent of the overall population.

According to David M. Smith of the Human Rights Campaign, "In the last three elections, the Voter News Service exit poll registered the gay vote at between four percent and five percent."

He continues, ". . . for the purposes of this study, we estimate the gay and lesbian population at 5 percent of the total U.S. population over 18 years of age." Therefore, based on the U.S. population, the total gay and lesbian population in the U.S. would be approximately 10,456,000.

In the 2000 U.S. Census "same-sex unmarried partner households" were counted for the first time. The census counted 601,209 gay and lesbian families (304,148 gay male families and 297,061 lesbian families). The Dubuque County census lists 24 same-sex male couples and 35 same-sex female couples living in the same household.*

This, of course, does not account for homosexuals living alone, with their families, or who have not declared themselves living with partners in the same household.

Smith continues, "The notion that gay and lesbian people only live on the coasts in major urban areas has been dispelled by these U.S. Census Bureau statistics. The geographical diversity of where gay and lesbian families are living is striking. From big cities to small farming towns, from the deep South to the Pacific Northwest, gay and lesbian families are part of the American landscape."

SOURCE _____

*www.gaydemographics.org/USA/states/iowa/2000census
Gay and Lesbian Families in the United States: Same-sex Unmarried Partner Households, David M. Smith, Human Rights Campaign, www.hrc.org.

Economic and social justice are inextricably linked, which is why the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) passed a resolution at its 1983 convention supporting enactment of legislation at the federal, state, and local levels that would guarantee the civil rights of all persons without regard to sexual orientation in employment, housing, credit, public accommodations and public service. The Communications Workers of America (CWA) has a nondiscrimination policy, as do many international and national unions, such as the United Auto Workers (UAW), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the United Steel Workers of America (USWA). I urge the Dubuque City Council to add sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination policy. It is both the right and the American thing to do.

Francis Giunta, President CWA Local 7110

I support efforts to include the terms “sexual orientation” in the city of Dubuque’s employment non-discrimination policy. Dubuque has positioned itself rightly as a community that promotes equal rights for all persons, knowing that the meaning of our commitment must become more concrete as we grow more aware of those who have no surety of the basic human respect that is their due. Some people, however, do not believe we need to include this terminology in the city’s policy because sexual orientation is already implied in the policy. If this is true, then no real loss [occurs] by adding the proposed terminology. But that such heat is in fact generated on the question of making explicit what is claimed as implied demonstrates that we have deeper questions to probe, and that Dubuque’s principled commitment to inclusivity is much more a goal than a present example. This proposal is not a politically partisan issue; indeed it is in accord with stated national government policy.

Let’s continue to build Dubuque as the principled, open, inclusive, business-inviting community that we want to be.

Duane Larson, President, Wartburg Theological Seminary

I squeezed Mike’s hand as the passenger door to his car was opened by my mother . . . I knew that Mike was left there in that parking lot that night with my father . . . My mother and I didn’t speak the entire way home. I muffled my sobs so as not to make noise in the silence of the car ride, all at once not wanting to exist at all . . . With the neck of my shirt wet with tears, and a steady stream still flowing, I proceeded to gather every pill bottle in the bathroom. I filled my pockets with pills from all of the bottles . . . I emptied my pockets and sat down on my bed with my medicinal buffet . . . I didn’t want to have to look my mom or dad in the eyes ever again. I didn’t want to hear about their disappointment in me. I didn’t have the energy to fight with them anymore. I was glad I had finally given up. I was ready to lie down on my bed and never wake up . . .

It was then that my mother walked in.

She grabbed my face, looked me in the eye, and told me that she loved me, and that she would rather have a gay son than a dead one. That was the beginning of my life . . . My mother at that moment gave me the greatest gift that anyone can ever give.

I graduated from high school in the top ten percent of my class. I proceeded on to a top ten university where I graduated at the top of my class with majors in Finance, Insurance and Risk Management. Today at 25, I’m more financially successful than I could have hoped to be. I’m an increasingly more involved member of a large, metropolitan community. I serve on the Board of Directors for numerous organizations, volunteer many hours of my time to community service efforts assisting others who are struggling from sickness or poverty. I am on the council at my church and sing in the choir. This is a life that almost wasn’t.

Today in America we are fighting the most important battle of our generation. Today you have the option of leaving a legacy that your children, grandchildren, and the community can look back on with awe. You can have the foresight to know that by including the gay and lesbian community you are promoting not just equal housing and employment, but better understanding and greater acceptance. You are making a statement that you may not understand what we feel, but you understand our struggles. Housing, employment, and police protection should not be things that we have to worry about . . . Can you give the gift to generations of gay and lesbian men and women that my mother gave to me that cold Dubuque night?

Joshua Morgan, San Francisco, Calif.

Where do I begin? As for my sexual preference . . . I am not actually full-fledged out of the closet for more than one reason. I have three wonderful

reasons. They are my children. I believe that in this day and age if you are a little different than the next, it comes back to haunt you and the ones closest to you. Sure, many of my friends and family know that I am a lesbian, but many still do not. I believe that if I were to truly and totally “come out of the closet,” my children could be in danger mentally and physically. I [have been] in a relationship now for over five years, and in a happy one, I may add. I remember when my oldest daughter first found out; she was confused, hurt, scared, and didn’t believe me. My other two children really did not care, as long as I was happy. Now, as my oldest gets older, and we bond more, she seems happy for me.

I also remember when my ex-husband first found out. He hated me, thought I was disgusting, and wanted to take our children away. He thought I would “RUB OFF” on them, and he wanted grandchildren. Well, guess what, so do I. Now he treats my partner and myself with consideration. He accepts me for the person I am. He lives with us, our three children and myself. My mother still has a problem with the “type” of person I turned out to be, but I am hoping someday she will come around. My father says as long as I am happy, so be it. My brother and sister also think the same. There are days when I wish I could show the affection for my partner the way I could if [one of us were] of the opposite sex. But I know some day things will change, and we will be seeing more same-sex relationships that do not have to hide who they are just to make their children’s lives safer.

When my daughter asked if I was interested in writing a small piece about my “coming out,” I was honored because I now realize she is not ashamed of me any more and is on my side. Believe me, the most important things in life are love, peace, and happiness, and my partner, children, and family give me all of that I need.

Signed, One Proud Lesbian Mother

PARENTS OF GAYS AND LESBIANS: REFLECTIONS

You’ve likely heard the saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!” We don’t find this to be true. We believe what Samuel Clemens wrote in the late 1800s: “There is no character, how so ever good and fine, but it can be destroyed by ridicule, however poor and witless.” It is both the ridicule and the “sticks and stones” that present problems for individuals who are gay in our community.

Our son was born and raised in Dubuque. He went to college in Iowa and now lives in New York City. He is gay and was a recipient of both

communicate its readiness to protect the basic civil rights of its citizens and of visitors. This can be facilitated by expanding the city ordinance to include sexual orientation as a protected class.

In 1998, the U.S. Catholic Bishops Committee on Marriage and Family, published a document, “Always Our Children.” One statement says, “The teaching of the Church makes it clear that the fundamental human rights of homosexual persons must be defended and that all of us must strive to eliminate any form of injustice, oppression or violence against them.”

Fr. Tom Rhomberg

Civil rights have always been intended to protect our citizens and provide inclusivity in American society. This opportunity to legally express our disdain for discrimination is consistent with our ethic of fairness.

Teri Goodmann

As an African American woman, I have fought hard for equality all my life. I feel no one should be discriminated against on the basis of race, creed, age, sex, national origin, disability, family status, or Sexual Orientation.

Ruby Sutton

I believe the amendment would be a good move for Dubuque since we all support the right not to discriminate against an individual in the workplace. This includes incidents where a person is in fact or is perceived to be gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender. We need to have a workplace that welcomes all people who want to work and live in Iowa without having biases. Society needs to teach tolerance of others, and this includes in the workplace, knowing that all people will be judged by the quality of their work and not by the prejudices of others.

Pat Murphy, state representative

I strongly support including sexual orientation to Dubuque’s non-discrimination policy. Dubuque needs to send a welcoming message to all regardless of race, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Let’s join with Iowa’s other major cities and lead the way on this important civil rights issue. The time to act is now.

Mike Connolly, state senator

In his recent book, author and Unitarian Universalist minister, Robert Fulghum said, “I do not want your sympathy for the needs of humanity. I want your muscle. I do not want you to talk about what you understand about this world. I want to know what you will do about it . . .”

Based on our first principle—the inherent worth and dignity of all people — Unitarian Universalists seek to foster acceptance, understanding and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in our religion and in society at large.

Maryann Caudill-LoGuidice, past-president of DACU, commissioned lay leader of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Dubuque

The Christian Church, along with all the major world religions, advocates for the love of one’s neighbor. People of various sexual orientations are your neighbors and mine. They work along side of us; they pay taxes like we do; they sit beside us in the church pew. They are deserving of our love, respect, and protection.

Do we wish such treatment for ourselves? Of course. Let us therefore accord our neighbor the very same treatment we expect ourselves. Only then will we truly live in community with one another.

Rev. Nancy Bickel

The Declaration of Independence states: We hold these truths to be self evident that all persons are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights.

What further proof do we need to adopt an ordinance change to include sexual orientation as a protected class?

Eldon Herrig

Since I believe that we should treat others as we would like to be treated, my wish is that all should be given the same opportunities to live a life free of prejudice and bias, regardless of their sex orientation. To help ensure this, I think an ordinance should be passed to grant them the same civil liberties others already have and many take for granted.

Marge Herrig

Having lived in Dubuque for the past 76 years and having served as a priest of the archdiocese for 50 years as pastor and as a social worker, I have become convinced that Dubuque, the beautiful community that it is, should

ridicule and aggression. He doesn’t want to live in an environment like this and would not return to Dubuque. He is well-educated, well-paid, and a community volunteer. He is a great community resource, one Dubuque doesn’t have.

We know sexual orientation discrimination exists in Dubuque. We need only look to the Dubuque Community Schools to provide data from their records on this issue. This type of discrimination doesn’t start and end in the school system. It is part of our culture, our fiber, and this discrimination needs to change now.

Adding sexual orientation to the non-discrimination policy in Dubuque is a step in the right direction, a way to change behavior in Dubuque. Once behavior changes, beliefs tend to change too. Our hope is that with this change individuals who seem different from the norm can still be treated with dignity and regard.

Tom and Wendy Woodhouse

Karen said she did not “come out” until she was away from here. She [still] doesn’t know if she was laughed at because she was just different or if kids knew something about her she was not aware of yet.

Karen was married eight years, trying to be someone she was not. After struggling for a long time, she gave up a man who loved her very much and was her best friend. She also lost his family and many people she thought were her friends. Don’t tell me one CHOOSES to be gay and stands to lose so much by coming out.

She is so much happier and we are so much closer to her now. She shares her life with us, which is much fuller and rewarding. Karen lives in a very gay-friendly community in Chicago where she is a professor of geology.

As a parent, I feel Karen was born 30 years too soon. She most likely would have come to terms with who she was sooner, had things been different back in the late '70s.

We have come a long way, with thousands of miles to climb. People need to try to imagine how it must feel to be gay and not be able to share that with the ones you love, your co-workers, boss, landlord or neighbors.

Cathy Bartels, Dubuque

We are members of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and the parents of a daughter who identifies with the GLBT community. Our daughter, an honor graduate of Dubuque Senior High School as well as the recipient of a Phi Beta Kappa key at her college graduation, counts herself among those who would never consider living in Dubuque.

Knowing that discrimination can and does exist here with no legal recourse, she has joined many other GLBT persons in leaving Dubuque, adding to the exodus of those finding more accepting municipalities elsewhere.

As it continues to trumpet its many real benefits, Dubuque needs to confront its official bias toward GLBT individuals. Our city council has voted twice to deny civil rights protection to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons. These actions effectively endorse discrimination against people on the basis of their sexual orientation. A city council unwilling to ensure equal treatment for all our citizens puts in jeopardy the community's drive to attract businesses, industries, and tourists.

Our plea is simply that the Dubuque City Council act now to add sexual orientation as a non-discrimination category. This will make clear the city's commitment to civil rights and opportunity for all.

Ralph W. and Ruth C. Scharnau

As an instructor of human services, and the mother of gay children, I would encourage the citizens of Dubuque to consider what is just and fair regarding the provision of equal rights to our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered citizens. We are long-standing residents of Dubuque and our family has made various contributions to the community. We love living here, yet we find it both painful and appalling that our own community does not consider members of our own family to be deserving of equal treatment under the law. We are not asking anyone to change his or her personal beliefs on this issue, but we are asking for equal protection under the law and for "liberty and justice for all."

Jan Scott

CITIZENS SPEAK OUT . . .

The protection of the basic human rights regarding housing, jobs, education, credit, and public accommodation is a rightful claim of every individual's personhood. The Human Rights Commission's proposal to the City Council for inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected class in Dubuque's non-discrimination policy is urging our civic leadership, on our behalf, to act justly towards the persons among us whom we know and respect as family, co-workers and neighbors.

Jordan Dahm, OSF

I encourage the Dubuque City Council to amend its anti-discrimination policies to include sexual orientation as a protected category. Doing so will affirm what is, I believe, the intent of our community—to be a welcoming and safe place for anyone to live. . . The Board of Education of the Dubuque Community School District[now] makes clear its commitment to equitable treatment for all of the district's students, staff, families and employees by including sexual orientation in policy language.

Words alone do not change actions. But words do paint a picture of the kind of schools—and communities—we intend to create and maintain. I believe that Dubuque intends to have both schools and a community that are welcoming and safe for all students and all citizens. Let's say so!

John L Burgart, superintendent, Dubuque Community School District

The City of Dubuque owes all its citizens and visitors the right to live free from discrimination when it involves age, race, religion, gender, physical disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. When we live in a community where the rights of others are respected, we give ourselves the highest measure of self-respect.

Dale Lass, Washington Junior High Principal

I believe that the City Council should add sexual orientation to the ordinances because I believe that equality should be extended to all people. The number one area of discrimination now in our schools is 'sexual orientation.' As community leaders, we need to take a stand, similar to the stand on racial discrimination our community took, to eliminate all forms of discrimination. It's simply the right thing to do.

Larry Mitchell, Dubuque Senior High School Principal

Bullying and harassment take place in too many of our schools. No one has the right to harass or bully because of the color of one's skin, the language one speaks or the language one does not speak, a person's religion, a person's politics, a person's appearance, of a person's perceived or real sexual orientation. Every child deserves a safe haven at school to learn and to grow. Teachers, administrators, and staff must guarantee that safe haven and schools must be held accountable when bullying or harassment takes place.

Governor Tom Vilsack