

About Us

Our purpose is to safeguard all individuals within Woodford County from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or physical condition with respect to housing, employment, and public accommodations. Breaking down the barriers of discrimination is the primary work of the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Human Rights Commission.

- We work to protect you from discrimination by enforcing the Federal and the Kentucky Civil Rights Acts in Versailles, Midway and Woodford County
- Our duty is to receive, initiate, investigate, seek to conciliate, and forward complaints alleging violations of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act to the Kentucky Human Rights Commission for further action.
- We seek to educate ourselves and our communities about the importance of civil rights protections and the dangers of unlawful discrimination.
- Members of the Commission are unpaid volunteers and are appointed by the local governing bodies, which provide the funding for our activities.

Contact Us

PO Box 1733

Versailles, KY 40383

859-429-2977

commission@woodfordhumanrights.com

www.woodfordhumanrights.com

We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Woodford County Courthouse. Any changes to our regular meeting schedule will be posted in advance. Meetings are open to the public and we welcome you to join us.



FAIRNESS ORDINANCE

Q&A

www.woodfordhumanrights.com

VERSAILLES, MIDWAY,
WOODFORD COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT THE FAIRNESS ORDINANCE

Q) Exactly what does the Fairness Ordinance do?

A) Since 1995 Versailles, Midway and Woodford County, through an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, have protected individuals from discrimination in **employment, housing and public accommodations** because of race, color, sex, age, physical condition, religion and national origin. A Fairness Ordinance extends that protection against discrimination to cover sexual orientation and gender identity.

This extension of protection does two things. It protects individuals from being humiliated, embarrassed or treated unfairly with respect to **employment, housing and public accommodations** because of sexual orientation and gender identity. And it sends a clear message to individuals and businesses that the community is a welcoming community to ALL people.

Q) Will this discourage businesses from coming to the community?

A) Quite the contrary. At least 45 of the largest and best-known businesses in Kentucky have internal non-discrimination policies covering sexual orientation and/or gender identity according to the Kentucky Human Rights Commission. These businesses want to know that the communities in which they might locate or send their employees will be welcoming and fair.

Q) How would having an ordinance like this help?

A) Laws rarely change the hearts and minds of men and women, but they can change conduct.

No matter how you feel about people in the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) community, you would not be allowed to treat them unfairly with respect to **employment, housing and public accommodations**.

Q) Will this infringe on peoples' freedom of religion?

A) Religious freedom has two components: freedom to believe and freedom to act. What one chooses to believe is an absolute freedom. Freedom to act cannot be absolute; it cannot inflict harm on others. This ordinance would mean that with respect to **employment, housing and public accommodations**, you cannot refuse to serve someone solely on the basis of his/her sexual orientation or gender identity, just as you cannot refuse to serve someone solely on the basis of race, sex or religion.

Churches and other religious organizations are usually exempt from this law. Also, in 2013 Kentucky enacted a law (KRS 446.350) which provides specific protection for the right to act or refuse to act when motivated by a sincerely held religious belief. The government must have a compelling government interest to restrict your action based on that religious belief.

Q) Does this mean we have to accept same-sex marriage?

A) No. A Fairness Ordinance has nothing to do with marriage.

Q) Do most people support protections like this?

A) Yes. 83% of Kentuckians support these types of protections according to a recent survey co-sponsored by the Kentucky Human Rights Commission and conducted by The Schapiro Group. They agree that all people should be afforded the opportunity to earn a living, obtain housing and eat at a favorite restaurant without being turned away just because of who they are.

Q) Would adopting this proposal mean we are approving of all of the conduct of members of the LGBT community?

A) No. We currently protect individuals from this type of discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, physical condition, religion and national origin. That has never been seen as your approving the conduct of all people in those categories.

Q) Isn't this just another unnecessary government regulation?

A) Most of us agree that some government regulation is absolutely necessary. Most of us agree, however, that at all levels of government we encounter unnecessary regulations. Where does this one fit?

If you believe that a valid purpose of local government is to create an environment where all people can have the opportunity for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," this ordinance serves that purpose. Our history is rife with the tragic stories of discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, religion, disability and national origin. That is why these categories of folks have been protected for decades. Recent history reveals the same tragic stories of discrimination and brutality based on gender orientation and gender identity. Government has responded by protecting its citizens in the past and should respond in the same way in the present. Protecting people from discrimination is a critical government function.