



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
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Legislation Text

File #: SR2013-355, **Version:** 1

Substitute Resolution Urging the Commissioners of Men's Sports to Publicly Support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athletes

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago has been the proud home to seven professional sports teams that have electrified and united our city: Cubs, White Sox, Bears, Sky, Bulls, Blackhawks, and Fire; and,

WHEREAS, Chicagoans of all genders, races, and classes, celebrate our teams' accomplishments as shared victories, yet gay professional athletes feel the need to remain closeted; and,

WHEREAS, unlike most other professions today, participants in professional sports believe they cannot be open about their sexual orientation. Only one active male player in any of the five major professional sports leagues in the United States has yet publicly acknowledged being gay, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. military, once one of the last bastions of discrimination against LGBT individuals, now recognizes the need to address prejudice openly, instead of assuming it does not exist; and,

WHEREAS, the Chicago Cubs and Chicago Blackhawks, recognizing the importance of inclusion, began participating in the annual Chicago LGBT Pride Parade in June 2010; and,

WHEREAS, the Chicago Cubs recorded a video featuring coaches and players- Manager Mike Quade, first base Coach Bob Dernier, pitcher Ryan Dempster, outfielder Marlon Byrd and second baseman Darwin Barney -for the "It Gets Better Project," becoming the second Major League Baseball team to participate in the online campaign aimed at curbing suicides among LGBT youth; and,

WHEREAS, Gary Bettman, the commissioner of the National Hockey League (NHL), became the first major-league commissioner to state on camera that he welcomes gay athletes to his league and that he will set up educational programs in the interest of safety for the athletes.

WHEREAS, National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell has implemented additions to their longstanding anti-discrimination policies saying: Posters will be displayed in locker rooms of all 32 teams conveying the NFL's anti-discrimination policy, while the league will conduct training on the matter - including for rookies and those involved in hiring and scouting new players - and strengthen protocols concerning the reporting of complaints of discrimination or harassment by players.

WHEREAS, Robbie Rogers, a former professional soccer player for the Chicago Fire, who came out as gay at the same time he announced his retirement would be welcomed back to the Fire as evidenced by Fire Coach Frank Klopas' statement: "Should Robbie want to return to the game, we would still be open to him being part of the Fire"; and,

WHEREAS, Jason Collins, a free agent player in the National Basketball Association (NBA) came out in

April of 2013 as the first professional male player in any of the five major US sports to do so publicly while actively playing, and,

WHEREAS, Bias-based harassment is far too often complicit in the disturbing number of LGBT youth taking their own lives; and,

WHEREAS, Our LGBT youth need LGBT sports heroes, in addition to other influential role models; and,

WHEREAS, With this in mind, the Last Closet Project campaign leadership, under the auspices of the nonprofit organization Woman Vision, is seeking interviews with all the major league sports Commissioners for the purpose of filming a statement of affirmation for LGBT athletes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor, and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago respectfully request that the Commissioners of Baseball, Football, Basketball, Hockey, and Soccer use the authority of their office to sanction players who have engaged in specific incidents of slurs and intolerance toward LGBT athletes; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioners state in a public interview their support for LGBT players and invite them to come out and, once they are out, pledge to make them safe and accepted; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, Football Commissioner Roger Goodell, Basketball Commissioner David Stern, Hockey Commissioner Gary Bettman, and Soccer Commissioner Don Garber.

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CITY COUNCIL

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May 8, 2013

To the President and Members of the City Council:

Your Committee on Human Relations, for which a meeting was held on May 7, 2013, having had under consideration one substitute resolution introduced by Alderman Joseph A. Moore (49th), Tom Tunney (44th), and James Cappleman (46th), on May 7, 2013, this being the resolution calling for commissioners of men's sports to publicly support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athletes. This recommendation was concurred in by a via voce vote of all committee members present with no dissenting votes.

Joseph A. Moore, Chairman Committee on Human Relations

Respectfully submitted,