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Jacksonville Fla. – Following a unanimous vote of approval by its Executive Committee, the Jacksonville Civic Council has once again called on the Jacksonville City Council to pass a Human Rights Ordinance protecting the rights of the city’s LGBT residents, along with those of small business and religious organizations. Civic Council leaders today sent a letter to the City Council urging passage of HRO 2017-15, and Civic Council members declared their intent to join the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce in actively lobbying for the initiative throughout the legislative process.

“Passage of this ordinance is a top priority for the Civic Council and the business community,” said Civic Council Chairman Ed Burr, who helped fine-tune the proposal to address the concerns of small business and religious organizations. “It is time for the Jacksonville to join the majority of Florida and U.S. cities in affirmatively protecting its citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. It’s the right thing to do for our community and the right time to do it.”

The Civic Council’s letter to the Jacksonville City Council makes three main points: 1) The proposed HRO protects the LGBT community from discrimination while preserving individual rights to religious freedom and not imposing an undue burden on small business; 2) It is simple, direct and specific to Jacksonville, having been developed with input from a broad spectrum of local business, civic and faith leaders; and 3) It enhances economic development opportunities by providing consistent anti-discrimination policies between private and public life.

“The proposed Human Rights Ordinance will strengthen our economy, attract people and businesses to Jacksonville, and advance a culture of fairness and respect for all,” Burr said. “When everyone in our community has an equal right to live and work without fear of discrimination, we all prosper.”

“Taking a stand against discrimination requires strong leadership by our elected representatives. We encourage members of the Jacksonville City Council to work together to pass this important legislation and put our city on the path to its full economic potential.”

About the Jacksonville Civic Council

The mission of the Jacksonville Civic Council is to promote a fiscally responsible, economically vibrant, thriving community that offers opportunity for all its residents. Our members accomplish this mission by supporting a safe and healthy city, great schools, a dynamic economy featuring a varied base of growth industries, a high standard of operational excellence at all levels of government and an exceptional quality of life including a strong downtown and thriving arts, culture, recreation and sports institutions.

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