



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley District 7
2180 Milvia St. 5th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704
PHONE 510-981-7170 FAX 510-981-7177 worthington@ci.berkeley.ca.us

CONSENT CALENDAR

September 24, 2002

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: SUPPORT PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY OCTOBER 11,
2002 IN BERKELEY

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council support a proclamation for National Coming Out Day on October 11, 2002 in Berkeley.

BACKGROUND:

National Coming Out Day is a day to accept ourselves as who we are, live a healthy life of honesty and openness about being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered, and share our stories with those who love and support us.

It is commonly believed that the "invisibility" of this minority group allows for the perpetuation of discrimination and hatred against women and men on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Berkeley has a long history of supporting equal rights for the lesbian/gay/bisexual community. This day provides an impetus for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals to "come out" in some form with the intention of allowing others a chance to question their own prejudices and stereotypes about this group of people.

National Coming Out Day has become a symbol of celebration and remembrance of those individuals who challenged us, inspired us, fought for equal civil and human rights, redefined families, educated the general public by combating stereotypes and myths, and supported us with open arms in our schools, homes, work, places of worship, and community in our life decisions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE.

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 981-7170.

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

WHEREAS, National Coming Out Day celebrates its twelfth year of promoting coming out as a powerful self affirmation and day of support for the sexual minority community; and

WHEREAS, National Coming Out Day has become a symbol for a single act of courage to live honestly, educate others about who we are, advocate to end discrimination based on perpetuated myths and stereotypes about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered society, and fight for equal civil rights for all people; and

WHEREAS, National Coming Out Day grew out of the desire to honor the invaluable contributions of those individuals both involved and remembered in the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights which helped to establish Lesbian and Gay rights as an issue important not merely to those involved in the queer community but to us all; and

WHEREAS, in recent years there has been an increase in the brutality of hate crimes toward the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community with an unprecedented rise in the use of weapons in the assault. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports for 1998 shows hate crimes based on sexual orientation have continued to rise, and increased 14.3 percent from 1997 to 1998 – even as overall crime decreased. Hate crimes based on sexual orientation have nearly tripled since the FBI began collecting statistics in 1991; and

WHEREAS, despite some progress that has been made in dispelling insidious stereotypes and numerous other forms of discrimination, there remains a significant amount of *homophobic inspired discrimination and violence that together creates a need for the citizens of Berkeley to come together in support of every individual, regardless of orientation, who has experienced this kind of negative atmosphere;* and

WHEREAS, National Coming Out Day encourages an entire community to stand up for not only whom they happen to love, but, far more importantly, for the underlying universal ideals of honesty, tolerance and acceptance through visibility and a commitment to

encouraging others to have the courage to come out in the hopes of eroding the cycle of discrimination against all members of minority groups that originated from a spirit of animosity and intolerance; and

WHEREAS, coming out can be an emotionally fulfilling way to assert acceptance of ourselves, a way to avoid lies or denial of one's feeling, and a step forward for self respect and human dignity; and

WHEREAS, we offer the support and encouragement of the City to each individual to come out to themselves, their family, friends, workplace, home, campus, place of worship, and anywhere and everywhere they feel prepared to do so; and

WHEREAS, we emphasize the equal importance of coming out as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning individual's friend and supporter opposing discrimination and affirming support of everyone of all sexual orientations; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Berkeley hereby proclaims October 11th to be

National Coming Out Day

in the City of Berkeley and we urge all citizens of our City to reflect now and throughout the year on ways all of us can live and work together by striving to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Mayor Shirley Dean

Vice Mayor Maudelle Shirek

Councilmember Linda Maio

Councilmember Margaret Breland

Councilmember Dona Spring

Councilmember Diane Woolley

Councilmember Betty Olds

Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Councilmember Polly Armstrong