LETTER FROM DR. ED YOUNG TO SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERS

DARE TO BE A DANIEL

It's great to be a Houstonian. This city has been my home for over 35 years, but I now have a genuine concern with a staggering moral issue before the Houston City Council.

This week, Mayor Anise Parker will continue to push the City Council to approve a "non-discrimination ordinance." This ordinance is more aptly described as a wide-reaching pro-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ordinance and it is a direct threat to the rights of all who live and work in our city.

In summary, the Mayor seeks the power to force individuals and businesses to affirm homosexual conduct and gender identity issues or face criminal penalties and fines. **The Mayor is sending a direct message: the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender citizens are more important than the rights of citizens who do not fall into one of those categories.** State and federal laws already prohibit discrimination against race, color, national origin, sex, and religion. This proposed city ordinance seeks to elevate sexual preference to a constitutionally protected class.

The verbiage of the proposed ordinance is couched in non-discrimination language but, without question, discriminates against people, like you and me, who want to live by our own personal convictions. We strongly believe that no one should suffer from discrimination and that each person is entitled to his or her own rights and moral beliefs. During recent discussions, those who oppose this ordinance have been labeled as "intolerant." Tolerance should not be defined as casting aside and acting against one's own beliefs to accommodate someone else's. Simply put, the homosexual community wants us to tolerate their behavior and beliefs but does not want to give the rest of us that same courtesy. On top of that, they want to use threats of criminal prosecution and fines to accomplish our acquiescence. Their rights should end where our morality and rights begin.

Here are two practical points I would like you to seriously consider:

1. Under the proposed ordinance, ladies' restrooms will be open to men who feel or claim to feel that they are women. As a result, restrooms, showers, and locker rooms throughout Houston will be open to sexual predators who can use this proposed ordinance as cover of protection to violate women and children. For example, a biological male could claim that his perceived gender identity is female, walk into a women's restroom, locker room, or shower and, *under this ordinance, he—not women and children—would be protected.* The business owner could face prosecution or a lawsuit if he asks a man to leave a ladies' restroom.

2. **This ordinance offensively violates Houstonian's rights as American citizens.**
By proposing this ordinance, the Mayor is basically telling local businesses: believe as I believe or close your doors. Consider the case in Colorado in which the owner of a bakery refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. The baker was sued for practicing his Biblical beliefs and for not condoning same-sex marriage. Under the proposed ordinance, this same situation in Houston would result in a taxpayer-funded investigation of the baker, a costly lawsuit for the City to pursue and for the baker to defend (in our already crowded judicial system), and criminal and financial penalties for the baker.

If you think that you will not be affected by the proposed ordinance simply because you do not live in the city, you are wrong. If you patronize Houston businesses, attend athletic or public events, or shop in our local malls, you will be directly affected because *the tragic ordinance, not the sign outside of the door,* will dictate

who may use a restroom.

We constantly tell our children to be strong and say “no” to things in which we do not believe. Will we do the same? The voice of the proponents of this ordinance has been heard. Before your rights as citizens are forcefully taken from you, let your voice be heard as well.

LET’S DARE TO BE A DANIEL IN HOUSTON

PRAY for the Houston City Council to vote AGAINST the proposed ordinance. The Bible tells us in 2 Chronicles 7: 14, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” Pray that the City Council will have the courage to stand for what is right and to protect, not take away, the rights of Houstonians.

CONTACT, either by email or phone, *at least one* council member and the mayor, no matter where you live in Houston or in the greater metropolitan area. For your convenience, I have provided the contact information below. Respectfully state that voting for this ordinance will take away your rights to live what you believe, will be unsafe for women and children, will adversely impact local businesses, will clog our courts, and will unnecessarily spend our tax dollars. Ask them to vote AGAINST THIS ORDINANCE.

ATTEND the Houston City Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 13, at 1:30 pm at Houston City Hall, 901 Bagby. Plan to arrive one hour before the meeting begins. If you plan to speak, you must sign up at the City Secretary's Office at least one day before the meeting by calling 832.393.1100.

TELL your friends what is at stake. Ask them to join you in prayer and to spread the word of this unconstitutional ordinance.

Dare to be a Daniel.

His and yours,

Ed Young