

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Mayor Becker and Councilwoman Love to Kick Off Dialogue on Discrimination Series Tomorrow**

*Upcoming series to take a closer look at discrimination in Salt Lake City*

**Salt Lake City** - Mayor Ralph Becker is taking a stand on discrimination and he's hoping Salt Lake City residents will become active participants in the effort. Tomorrow night Mayor Becker and City Council Chair Jill Remington Love will kick off the Dialogue on Discrimination Series - a five-part series of public discussions intended to gather public input on discrimination issues in Salt Lake City to eventually help inform the development of public policy.

At the kick-off event, Mayor Becker and Councilwoman Remington Love will announce details of the upcoming Dialogue on Discrimination Series and be joined by a panel of local experts to answer questions about the effects of discrimination. Those experts will include:

Cristy Gleave, Chair, Human Rights Commission Sherrie Hayashi, Commissioner, Utah Labor Commission Christine Johnson, Representative, State of Utah, House of Representatives Matthew Knotts, Executive Director, Disability Law Center Valerie Larabee, Executive Director, Utah Pride Center Karen McCreary, Executive Director, ACLU Director Octavio Villalpando, Associate Professor, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Kilo Zamora, Executive Director, The Inclusion Center.

**Tomorrow night's event will take place in Room 315 at the City and County Building, 451 S. State St. at 6:00 p.m. It is free and open to the public.**

The results of a recently completed city-wide discrimination survey done by the Mayor's Office of Diversity and Human Rights will also be announced as part of the evening's activities.

Earlier this year Mayor Becker charged the Salt Lake City Human Rights Commission with conducting the survey. Now the mayor and city council want to broaden the effort by creating a forum for residents to share their stories and concerns about discrimination.

"Discrimination is not an easy topic to discuss, but it is a discussion that needs to happen," said Yolanda Francisco-Nez, coordinator for the Mayor's Office of Diversity & Human Rights. "The information we gather from the dialogues will make a powerful statement about the effects of discrimination."

The dialogue series is part of Mayor Becker's ongoing effort to build a framework for his Human Rights Initiatives, developed during his campaign. The goal is to protect the human rights of residents and determine the effects of discrimination in Salt Lake City.

"We're interested in how constituents perceive discrimination in our city," said Francisco-Nez. "Our primary concern is that anyone who feels affected by discrimination has a forum to be heard."

The Office of Diversity & Human Rights provides outreach to minority and ethnic groups in Salt Lake City. In 2008 the focus was expanded to include human rights issues. The Salt Lake City Human Rights Commission is a seven-member panel under the Office of Diversity & Human Rights. Members are appointed by the mayor and make recommendations about human rights issues in Salt Lake City.

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