



November 10, 2014

Mr. Bill Bradley
Chairman, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce
123 W. Mountain
P.O. Box 4216
Fayetteville, AR 72702-4216

Mr. Steve Clark
President, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce
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Fayetteville, AR 72702-4216

Gentlemen:

I would like to respectfully ask that the Chamber of Commerce board of directors rescind its recent action regarding the civil rights ordinance.

Although I serve as an ex-officio member of the board, I was never invited to offer my opinion on the decision to issue a statement about the ordinance. Likewise, other ex-officio members were denied the opportunity to address the issue. However, your media release indicated that the action was unanimously endorsed by the board members. Such a statement created the impression that I was in concurrence with your action.

The failure to include all ex-officio members in the discussion contributes to the perception that the board operated under a veil of secrecy and was opposed to any divergent views. Such a perception undermines the ability of the board to demonstrate that it consistently functions within the best traditions of our city which embraces openness and fair play.

Many people favor allowing the citizens of Fayetteville to decide the issue at the ballot box in December, rather than having pressure exerted by the Chamber. If, indeed, the law is vague and too broad, the court system of Arkansas will clarify the law in due course.

This has become a flash point issue for our city. The Chamber should promote harmony and prosperity, not create crisis. This has strained relations among town, gown, and individual citizens.

Sincerely,

G. David Gearhart
Chancellor