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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Task Force issues report**

A citizen task force charged by the Mayor and City Council to research and investigate the level of discrimination in Springfield because of sexual orientation and transgender issues, has submitted their findings to Mayor Bob Stephens, City Manager Greg Burris and the Springfield City Council.

The task force was created in December 2012 after City Council opted to table a controversial proposal which would have added sexual orientation and gender identity to the City's anti-discrimination law. City council formally adopted a [resolution to create the Sexual Orientation and Citizens' Task Force](#) (pdf), which the Mayor said would allow voices into the discussion that were not a part of the ordinance's formation.

The report includes [recommendations](#) (pdf - 18.2 mb), ranked from most to least favored by the Task Force. Two recommendations received a majority of support from the Task Force. In addition to ranking the Task Force's recommendations, the report indicates the advantages and disadvantages of each option considered from the perspective of the citizens of Springfield.

Task force members included:

- [J. Miles Sweeney, Senior Circuit Judge](#) (retired)
- Lola Butcher
- Randall Doennig
- Reverend Steve Gardner
- Dick Hardy
- Dr. Ginger Holczer
- Jeff Houghton
- Cindy Lear
- Rick McLain,
- Lynne Meyerkord
- Reverend Michael Overton
- Pam Sailors
- Dr. Robert Saylor
- Sarah Smith
- David Trippe
- Gary Whitaker
- Angela Filbeck (alternate)

The committee as a whole met on 10 occasions and heard from a number of people with specific expertise or interest in the topic. The report includes information on these presenters and a short

summary of their messages. The committee did not invite public comment, considering that to be a responsibility of City Council, Judge Sweeney said.

The committee divided into three subcommittees: Employment, Public Accommodations and Housing, and Transgender and Healthcare. Chairs were Dick Hardy (public accommodations), Gary Whitaker (employment) and David Trippe (health and transgender). They studied their subjects independently and the reports of those committees are next on the list.

"Though the committee was in general agreement that laws should not be made on the basis of religion, the fact that so much of both the support for the ordinance and opposition to it came from religious conviction, a subcommittee was formed to study that subject," Sweeney explained in the report's executive summary.

Co-Chairs of that subcommittee were David Trippe and Rev. Michael Overton. The report from that committee was also included.

"After all the information was in, the committee as a whole identified various options which might be considered by council," Judge Sweeney explained. "The committee then voted on each of the options. Those deliberations, votes, and final recommendations to council are set out and summarized by member Gary Whitaker, with input from Dave Trippe."

For more information, contact Judge Miles Sweeney at 417-838-5277. He will be available at the Busch Municipal Building, 840 N. Boonville at 1 p.m. for interviews.

The full report can be found online: [www.springfieldmo.gov/taskforce/sogi/](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/taskforce/sogi/).