



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MEMORANDUM

Date: October 17, 2023
To: Anchorage Assembly
From: Mayor Dave Bronson
Subject: Veto of Ordinance No. AO 2023-90(S), as amended.

Today, pursuant to Section 2.30.100 of the Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) and Section 5.02 of the Municipal Charter, I hereby veto AO 2023-90(S), as amended, which passed at the Assembly's regular meeting of October 10, 2023.

This ordinance is a solution in search of a problem. Our Office of Equal Opportunity and Office of Equity and Justice recently passed their annual audit with flying colors. In addition, both offices have public visibility in advocating for their respective missions: equal opportunity, and equity for those who are disadvantaged. There is no good reason to burden these offices – and, by extension, Anchorage taxpayers – with additional data requirements as contemplated in the ordinance.

The Assembly has imposed this burden because some members want Anchorage to become a Certified Welcoming City, as determined by the national nonprofit Welcoming America. This is a misguided policy decision. Welcoming America is a grantee of George Soros' Open Society Foundation. As the founder of Welcoming America wrote on the Open Society Foundation webpage over 10 years ago, this nonprofit attempts to attract "thousands of individuals and organizations who want to replicate the Welcoming work in their own communities." (<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/building->

more-welcoming-america). In other words, Certified Welcoming City is a product, and the Assembly would like Anchorage to be its newest customer.

The Assembly has already suggested the terms. At the regular meeting on September 26, 2023, it was openly discussed that contractors would be sought to obtain and mine this new data for the OEO and OEJ Departments in the Assembly's proposed budget revisions. (Regular Meeting of Sep. 26, 2023 at 3:28:25 – 3:28:40, available at <https://meetings.muni.org/AgendaOnline/Meetings/ViewMeeting?id=5236&doctype=1>)

As I have said before and will say again, Anchorage is already a welcoming city. We have the most diverse schools in the country and vibrant immigrant communities. Many members of these communities serve in this administration. Our OEO and OEJ offices are firing on all cylinders. We don't need to divert Anchorage tax dollars to a national non-profit to repeat what we already know.

I hereby veto AO 2023-90(S), as amended.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Bronson", is written over a horizontal line.

Dave Bronson, Mayor of Anchorage