

May 26, 2023

Office of Mayor Jane Castor
City of Tampa
306 East Jackson Street
Tampa, Florida 33602

RE: Applauding Tampa's Commitment to Social Equity, Human Rights and Inclusion

Dear Mayor Castor:

I am writing on behalf of The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) to applaud your commitment and that of the residents of the City of Tampa to social equity, human rights, and inclusion.

GSA is the professional membership organization representing researchers, clinicians, and educators who study all facets of the aging process across the life course. As such, many GSA members are actively involved in studying — and are passionate about — public policy, the long-term impact of inequality, and issues of social justice.

GSA is more than 75 years old and has long served as a voice for advancing the study of aging. We recognize the need to be intentional in our actions to achieve our highest ideals. For these reasons, we make an active and conscious effort to challenge racism and discrimination in any form and view this as central to our ideals of creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive Society that promotes meaningful lives for all as we age.

We congratulate the city of Tampa for earning a score of 100 from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index (MEI) in 2022. This index demonstrates the ways that many cities support the LGBTQ+ people who live and work there, even where states and the federal government have failed to do so. We also applaud your commitment to the inclusion and fair treatment of all persons regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status as outlined in the city's Social Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Initiatives.

We strongly oppose recently enacted laws and policies imposed by the State of Florida that censor the teaching of science and limit academic freedom, suppress voting, discriminate against gender minority individuals, and dismantle programs that improve diversity, equity, inclusion and access for citizens. GSA is implementing many activities in response to these developments to use the collective weight of our Society to raise awareness of these discriminatory laws and their effects across the life course.

We are buoyed by and supportive of Tampa's demonstrated inclusiveness, a model for other cities in Florida. GSA is hosting its 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting in Tampa, Florida, from November 8 to 12. This event regularly brings 4,000 attendees from around the world to share new scientific discoveries related to aging. We are pleased to highlight Tampa's many attractions including museums, retail shops, and restaurants, especially, local, minority owned and LGBTQ+ owned establishments.


Regrettably, the many discriminatory actions taken by the Florida state government do not align with GSA's values. As such, GSA will not be able to host future events in Florida while the current discriminatory laws and policies remain in place.

We invite you and members of your administration to join us at our 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting to learn more about how our members cultivate excellence in interdisciplinary aging research and education to advance innovations in practice and policy.

Sincerely,



James C. Appleby, BSPHarm, MPH, ScD (Hon)
Chief Executive Officer



James F. Nelson, PhD, FGSA
GSA President

GSA policy is to embed diversity and inclusion as fundamental principles and practices as we pursue greater equity across the Society. To read the full board-approved GSA Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, visit the [Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Webpage](#).