



**LEHIGH COUNTY**  
*Public Information Office*  
Government Center | 17 South Seventh Street  
Allentown, PA 18101-2401  
Phone: 610-782-3002 | Fax: 610-871-2755

## **Press Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**CONTACT:** Adrianna Calderon

610-782-3002

### **Lehigh County Passes Non-Discrimination Ordinance**

**County Executive Armstrong pleased to sign groundbreaking protections for county residents into law**

**LEHIGH COUNTY, PA-** Lehigh County Executive Phil Armstrong recently signed legislation approved by the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners establishing a county-wide non-discrimination ordinance to protect people from discrimination in employment, housing, education and health care, and public accommodations. The legislation was approved by the Board of Commissioners on February 14, 2024.

“The number one job of government is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its residents,” County Executive Phil Armstrong said. “Lehigh county has taken a positive step forward with the passing of a county-wide nondiscrimination ordinance in this past week.” Armstrong continued, “When the United States Supreme Court reversed *Roe v. Wade*, many of the protections that Americans take for granted can no longer be taken for granted. As a result of that decision, Lehigh County has taken matters into our own hands to protect our residents from discrimination of all types.”

In 2021, The Board of Commissioners established a Human Relations Advisory Council and tasked it with addressing issues of discrimination as they may occur in Lehigh County. The Advisory Council recommended a non-discrimination ordinance presented to the Board of Commissioners in 2023. The proposed ordinance was revised several times and was introduced at the beginning of 2024.

When the legislation goes into effect on June 1, 2024, it will establish a Human Relations Commission comprised of volunteers appointed by the County Executive and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

“This ordinance ensures we protect all people living in Lehigh County currently and in the future,” said Commissioner Zach Cole-Borghi, “I am proud to live in a County that stands up and protects its most vulnerable residents.”

The Lehigh County Human Relations Commission will work in coordination with various county departments to handle investigations based upon complaints. A written report detailing investigations, proceedings, hearings and studies will be presented to the Board of Commissioners not less than once a year.

“Lehigh County has taken a bold step in the pursuit of Liberty and Justice for all,” said Geoff Brace, Chair of the Board of Commissioners. “I am proud of the work done by the Human Relations Advisory Council, Commissioner Cole-Borghi’s leadership, and Executive Armstrong’s decision to sign the bill to put Lehigh County firmly on record against discrimination.”

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