



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 7, 2024

Washington City Says No to Raising “Pride” Flag

A Seattle-area city has voted against raising the so-called Pride Flag during June, which has become de facto holiday for the LGBTQ community. The Newcastle, Washington, city council voted 4-3 against a motion from council member Paul Charbonneau to raise the flag.

Mayor Robert Clark asserted that the city already flies the “most unifying symbol in the history of the world” — the American Flag. Clark said that, as a rule, the city does not do proclamations of any kind.

“I brought forward the motion because raising the Pride flag is an easy thing for us to do as a local government to show the LGBTQIA+ community that we see them and that we value them,” said Charbonneau.

“Many groups have been historically underrepresented in local government, including the LGBTQIA+ community, and raising the flag as we have in past years shows them that their government cares about them and invites them to engage with us.”

But it’s an unnecessary and potentially divisive measure, according to the mayor.

“Proclamation says a city directs the people to honor, respect, or support a certain thing or item,” Clark said. “Well, what if the people in the community don’t do that? If we say you have to support this because we proclaimed it, but certain people in the community say no.”

“The most unifying symbol in the history of the world flies over this city council every day,” Clark offered. “That’s the American flag. That’s diverse enough for me. That includes everybody in the community.”

Clark further pointed out that raising the flag of one group opens up Pandora’s Box when it comes to city recognition of alternative groups.

“If we start raising flags, then we’ve got to raise everybody’s. Do you want a Hamas flag flying over the City of Newcastle? Or a MAGA flag. How about a Trump flag or an Antifa flag?” Clark asked. “We’re not going there folks,”

According to council member Sun Burford, who voted the raise the Pride Flag, the decision marks a move backward for the city.

“This decision, made despite the flag being flown for over four years, is a step backward for our community,” Burford told KOMO News. “The intolerant comments made by some council members are



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alarming and anachronistic. Our community deserves better. We deserve leaders who embrace inclusivity, diversity, and acceptance. I urge our council to reconsider the decision and show our support for the LGBTQ+ community.”

Clark further explained his stance against the “Pride” flag in a written statement.

“My position is that government should be very limited. The First Amendment was created for a reason. To allow freedom of assembly, speech, and religion,” the mayor explained. “The government has no right to tell people what to say, what to think, or what to do.”

“Raising a flag or issuing a statement says this is what the government believes, and since the government represents all the people the clear inference is that everyone in the community also believes it. This is false on every issue, no matter how harmless,” Clark contended.

One Pride adherent, Corrialyn Guyette, was particularly incensed that Clark lumped the Pride movement in with Hamas.

“He [the mayor] referenced and compared the Pride flag to the Hamas flag. That comparison is outrageous. That’s just icing on the cake, for the community to just stand back and say, ‘How could he of even made that statement?’”

Guyette called for a reconsideration of Clark’s position: “This is a moment to educate. This is a moment to pull together as a community. And hopefully, get that mayor to reconsider and raise the flag.”

A protest against the city council’s decision is scheduled for June 18, where proponents will [gather](#) in their “rainbow, colorful glory.”



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