**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Columbus Again Earns Perfect Score on HRC Municipal Equality Index**

***City, Franklin County Proud to Support GLBT Equality***

Columbus has again been recognized as one of the best cities in the nation for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. A year after scoring its first 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, a measure of how welcoming cities are of their LGBT residents, Columbus has again earned the [highest possible score](http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files/assets/resources/MEI-columbus-ohio-2014.pdf) on the index, joining 38 other cities nationwide in the honor. The honor comes only months after Columbus received HRC's Equality Award in recognition of the city's longtime efforts to make Columbus the best community in the nation for LGBT people.

**“We have continued to respond to the needs of our LGBT community in order to make Columbus better for all our residents,” said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. “I thank the Human Rights Campaign for recognizing our efforts to treat our LGBT residents with dignity.”**

The city's MEI score is based on its efforts in six areas: nondiscrimination laws, relationship recognition, city employment and contracting policies, the inclusiveness of city services, law enforcement, and municipal leadership on LGBT equality.

**“The Municipal Equality Index confirms that our city values diversity and welcomes the LGBT community with open arms,” said Council President Andrew J. Ginther, who recently hosted a Why Marriage Matters** [**roundtable discussion**](http://youtu.be/-tkF818jM2o) **on marriage equality. “We encourage all cities in Ohio to try to match our score, and we urge the state of Ohio to finally treat LGBT couples, families, and employees equally under the law.”**

While the Human Rights Campaign generally does not score counties in the index, HRC noted Franklin County's commitment to equality. County employment policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and the county extends health benefits to the domestic partners and dependents of county employees. County commissioners have also advocated for LGBT equality under state and federal law.

**“Franklin County is proud to be home to a large, active, and diverse LGBT community,” said Franklin County Commission President Marilyn Brown. “LGBT people contribute so much to the life of our community, and we will continue to do everything we can to make Central Ohio the best place in the country for LGBT people to live and raise their families.”**

Among Ohio cities, only Cincinnati matched Columbus' score. Dayton earned a 95, Cleveland a 79, Akron a 68, and Toledo a 58.

**“Columbus remains a leader both in Ohio and nationally in the movement for equality,” said Cathryn M. Oakley, HRC’s legislative counsel for state and municipal advocacy. “The city's experience is an example of how a municipality can grow and thrive if it embraces its LGBT community.”**

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