



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF UTAH FOUNDATION, INC
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June 2, 2014

Salt Lake City Council
451 South State Street, Room 304
PO Box 145476
Salt Lake City UT 84114-5476

Via email to council.comments@slcgov.com and individual member emails

Re: Days of '47 Parade

Dear Members of the Salt Lake City Council:

We followed news articles last week that stated the Salt Lake City Council may send a letter to the organizers of the Days of '47 Parade. We understand that in that letter, the Council would encourage organizers to include Mormons Building Bridges in the Parade and in so doing to reference the success of the City's anti-discrimination ordinances.

As staunch advocates of equality for all, we understand the spirit behind the Council wanting a more inclusive Days of '47 Parade. A decision by Council members not to attend the Parade would be a perfectly appropriate way to send that message. But we believe it is a bridge too far for a governmental entity to use official tactics, like sending a letter on Council letterhead that mentions municipal code, in its attempt to influence private parade organizers to alter the makeup of their parade.

Under the First Amendment, government officials are not allowed to use their official power to attempt to sway or select the speech or association of private citizens, no matter what the cause. After all, the First Amendment is at its strongest and is most important when protecting speech that the government disapproves or that is otherwise controversial. A vibrant public debate means shielding all speakers from official encroachment, whether we agree or disagree with their message. Given these considerations, we encourage the Council to refrain from sending any official letter to the Parade organizers.

Sincerely,


Karen McCreary
Executive Director


John Mejia
Legal Director