



AGENDA REPORT

City Attorney's Office

DATE:	May 5, 2026
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Shannon Moore, Interim City Attorney Dallae Chin, Senior Assistant City Attorney Brandi Robinson, Assistant City Attorney
Subject:	Establishing a Commitment to Caste Equity and the Prevention of Caste-Based Discrimination
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Adoption of the resolution and ordinance may require modest costs for staff training, development of reporting mechanisms, and educational initiatives. These costs can be absorbed into existing diversity, equity, and inclusion program budgets or incorporated into future budget allocations.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	None.
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	<p>The City of Richmond seeks to ensure that all residents are protected from discrimination and inequity. Caste-based discrimination, though less visible in U.S. law and practice, has been documented within employment, housing, education, and public services across communities. This resolution formally establishes the City's commitment to caste equity and adds caste as a protected category under the jurisdiction of the City's Human Rights and Human Relations Commission, and creates pathways for education, reporting, and enforcement.</p> <p>On January 26, 2026, the Human Rights and Human Relations Commission (HRHR Commission) unanimously approved recommending that the City Council adopt the caste discrimination resolution adding caste as a</p>

	protected category within the jurisdiction of the City's Human Rights and Human Relations Commission.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	ADOPT an ordinance (second reading) amending sections 3.58.010, 3.58.020, and 3.58.060 of the Richmond Municipal Code to add caste as a protected category within the jurisdiction of the City's Human Rights and Human Relations Commission – City Attorney's Office (Shannon Moore 510-620-6505/Dallae Chin 510-620-5517/Brandi Robinson 510-620-5518).

DISCUSSION:

Richmond has a longstanding commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity. Discrimination in all forms undermines these values and harms individuals' ability to fully participate in community life.

Caste, a system of social stratification based on hereditary status, creates barriers to equality by restricting access to opportunities and fostering prejudice. Studies and reports have shown that caste-based discrimination affects workplaces, schools, housing, and civic participation even in diaspora communities in the United States.

While federal and state civil rights frameworks protect against many forms of discrimination, caste has not been explicitly recognized in most policies. Richmond's adoption of this resolution aligns with the City's principles of equity and its role as a leader in advancing civil and human rights.

The resolution affirms the City's commitment to caste equity through the following measures (Attachment 1):

1. Affirmation of Caste Equity

The City of Richmond affirms its commitment to caste equity and condemns caste-based discrimination in any form within the community.

2. Protection Against Caste-based Discrimination

The City will include caste as a protected category within the jurisdiction of the City's Human Rights and Human Relations Commission, with the objective of protecting residents from caste-based discrimination in City employment, housing, education, and access to public services.

3. Training and Education

The City's Human Rights and Human Relations Commission will be empowered to conduct training programs for City employees, law enforcement, and community leaders to recognize, prevent, and address caste-based

discrimination, and to promote educational initiatives to raise awareness among the general public about the harms of caste discrimination.

4. Reporting and Enforcement Mechanisms

Incidents of caste-based discrimination occurring within the City will be reported to the City’s Human Rights and Human Relations Commission. Residents will be encouraged to report any violations, and appropriate actions will be taken to address and resolve such complaints.

5. Community Engagement

The City’s Human Rights and Human Relations Commission will be empowered to engage with community organizations, advocacy groups, and affected communities within the City to collaborate on efforts to combat caste-based discrimination and promote equity and inclusion.

6. Review and Accountability

The City Council will regularly review the effectiveness of these measures and make necessary adjustments to ensure the ongoing commitment to caste equity is upheld.

Richmond Municipal Code Chapter 3.58 lists race, religion, color, sex, ancestry, marital status, familial status, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, weight, height, place of birth, and disability as protected categories within the jurisdiction of the Human Rights and Human Relations Commission. The proposed ordinance amends applicable sections of Chapter 3.58 to add caste as an additional protected category within the jurisdiction of the commission (Attachment 2).

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Resolution Establishing a Commitment to Caste Equity and the Prevention of Caste-Based Discrimination

Attachment 2 – Ordinance Amending Sections 3.58.010, 3.58.020, and 3.58.060 of the Richmond Municipal Code