



Board of Directors Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2021 **ITEM NUMBER:** 10A

SUBJECT: Discussion About the Display of Flags at OC Fair & Event Center and Vote on Next Steps

DATE: February 19, 2021

FROM: Community Affairs Committee: Directors Kovacevich and Ruiz

PRESENTATION BY: Community Affairs Committee: Directors Kovacevich and Ruiz

RECOMMENDATION

At the Board of directors' discretion.

BACKGROUND

On May 23, 2019 the Board of Directors approved a resolution which in part called for the display of the Pride flag year-round at OC Fair & Event Center (OCFEC) in an effort to promote inclusiveness of all diverse groups within the LGBTQ community.

Beginning at the July, 2020 Board of Directors meeting during Public Comment, some members of the public commented on the display of the Pride flag indicating that they felt it only represented a segment of the community, and that OCFEC should also include other flags representative of the community or just display the American, California State and OCFEC flags.

In January, 2021 the Community Affairs Committee conducted a public survey to measure the community's opinion on a wide variety of diversity, equity and inclusion topics, including the display of flags at OCFEC. The results of the survey are attached. In addition, the committee held a public meeting on January 20, 2021 to gather additional feedback on all the topics from the survey. The vast majority of comments during the meeting were focused on the display of flags at OCFEC. Several follow-up emails were received by OCFEC following the survey and are also attached.

Based on the wide range of public comment, the Community Affairs Committee recommends that the Board review the original resolution and discuss whether to reaffirm or amend. A copy of the original resolution from May 23, 2019 is attached.

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

Question 1:

The OC Fair & Event Center celebrates the diversity of Orange County and is seeking input from the public about how to equitably represent the community. Currently, the OC Fair & Event Center displays the American flag, the State of California flag, the OC Fair & Event Center logo flag and the Pride flag in three locations on the fairgrounds. Which ONE of the following best describes what you think is the most equitable set of flags to fly?

Results:

	RESPONSES	POPULATION	SUMMARY
Keep displaying all the current flags and no others	135	697	19.40%
Keep displaying the current flags and consider adding more flags to represent additional subgroups in Orange County	125	697	17.90%
Keep displaying the American, California State and OC Fair & Event Center flags, but replace the Pride flag with a flag that represents all the diverse subgroups in Orange County (a "unity flag")	106	697	15.20%
Keep displaying the American, California State and OC Fair & Event Center flags, but remove the Pride flag to avoid singling out or leaving out subgroups in Orange County	289	697	41.50%
Not Sure	24	697	3.40%
Other:	14	697	2.00%

Additional Comments to Question 1:

1. Rotate the Pride flag with other flags, even though I am a member of the LGBT community.
2. Keep all that are currently flying, including the Pride Flag, and add a Unity Flag? Also add MIA flag
3. American and California flag only.
4. This is BS. The Fairgrounds is caving into Calvary Chapel. Seriously, this is an important issue?
5. This is stupid. OCF s/b out in front and setting an example for progressive and inclusionary ideals
6. Don't
7. Ridiculous - NOT AN ISSUE!
8. Keep American, CA and OC Fair, and fly pride flag during pride month only (June)
9. I don't care
10. Only the American pride flag no other
11. The only flags that should be flown are the American flag and the State of California.
12. Remove the American, CA and Pride flags. Keep only the OC Fair flags
13. Fly: American, State, ALL MILITARY, O.C. Fair/Event Center. Avoid Sub Groups to avoid alienation

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

Question 2:

In which ways, if any, would you like to see our county's diversity celebrated at the OC Fair & Event Center? (Choose all that apply)

Results:

	RESPONSES	POPULATION	SUMMARY
Permanent multi-cultural mural displayed throughout the year representing OC's diverse communities	175	585	29.90%
Permanent art piece or sculpture displayed throughout the year representing OC's diverse communities	112	585	19.10%
Special exhibitions/events during the annual OC Fair	285	585	48.70%
More ethnic food concessions during the annual OC Fair	258	585	44.10%
Special cultural days at the annual OC Fair	217	585	37.10%
Performances from specific cultural groups during the annual OC Fair	241	585	41.20%
None of these	85	585	14.50%
Other:	36	585	6.20%

Additional Comments to Question 2:

1. How about we all celebrate being American instead subgrouping people which is the real bigotry
2. Please keep politics out of the fairgrounds
3. Partner with Pacific Symphony to produce concert celebrations that showcase the diverse communities
4. Stop giving in to the liberal movement as it is disgusting to me.
5. It's well represented already
6. Fly only the flags that represent the United States, Calif. No flags of any kind of special groups
7. More Patriotic
8. How about letting OC concessionaires sell during the OC Fair?
9. Healthier food
10. Stop with this diversity crap! I will not attend
11. As a BIPOC, this pandering is disgusting. I'm so sick and tired of this BS. IM NOT OPPRESSED!
12. Promoting that we are all Americans.
13. Don't Care
14. This years..and maybe every year forever....should have a unity/diversity feel oc fair theme <3
15. We know OC is diverse but singling out each group, to me and family, is discriminatory to many.
16. There is no way to represent all the diverse cultures, so by singling out certain ones show prefer
17. We are all AMERICANS first. If you placate to the never ending sub groups, there will be no end
18. make your BOD more diverse as well

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

19. These are all great ideas! Costa Mesa has the art power to do this!
20. Always have the Chinese accrobats
21. The county is made up of everyone. No segregating groups is necessary.
22. Its fine just the way it is
23. ?
24. Can't appease them all. Just stay neutral. We all ate USA & CA residents
25. Do what you want!
26. We miss the market place
27. "special" is not needed - just appropriate recognition like many other parts of people's lives
28. No permnt diversity specific celebrations.2 many to recognize permntly. Someone will be slighted
29. Somebody or some group will always feel left out. Let's celebrate everybody and everything, every d
30. Hold a Orange County Diversity Cultural Event where all groups and expression could be presented
31. any of the above
32. Out of many one. E Plurieus Unum
33. all of the above!

Question 3:

Any other comments or suggestions for how OC Fair & Event Center can better celebrate all the cultures and communities in Orange County?

Write in Comments to Question 3:

1. It's just go to hear that you are concerned and that you are reaching out. I'm sure any additional representation will do just fine. We all just want to visit you again soon!
2. Why have events or flags that will add division? Just have the Ca flag and USA flag.
3. It's nice that you want to fly a flag, but actions speak louder than flags. Try to include more diverse groups in your events, schedule more cultural events and actually accomplish something besides buying a flag.
4. N/A
5. Why does a certain cultures or communities have to be called out? We are all Americans. Why can't we all just be that and move on. I don't understand this equity and diversity need.
6. You are never going to be able to make everyone happy. I have seen improvement over the years for the OCFEC in becoming more welcoming and accepting of diverse community groups. Keep up the good work!
7. Good luck! There?s no way to please everyone! However, during these times, I feel it is important to highlight groups that have historically been abused and repressed.
8. Whatever you do must be for all people, not just singling out one group as you have done with the Pride Flag.
9. We are one peoples gathered around the American flag.

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

10. Do not fall into the bs. The oc fairgrounds are not political nor do they need to become political.
11. Add to events calendar; special Multicultural events, as you do with Scottish Festival, etc.
12. Bring back the swap meet!
13. Music
14. I am sure anything you come with will be great.
15. Start small and grow as new thoughts and ideas are created each year
16. I remember seeing Hawaiian dancers perform at the OC Fair; it was lovely, and I learned something about the Hawaiian culture. Any time dance, foods, drinks, culture, etc celebrate other cultures, we all learn and expand our minds, so different foods and arts from other cultures and communities would be welcome.
17. none.
18. Remove pride flag
19. Work with the Symphony and other major arts organizations to showcase high-quality streams of work.
20. Stop trying to kowtow to every single group. Be inclusive not decisive.
21. Stop reacting to the liberal agenda. Stand up for America. By singling out groups you are contributing to division not unity.
22. "By not singling anyone out we can celebrate people of all walks And diversities "
23. please have the fair this year!
24. LGBTQ market & performance event. Food, art, drag queen shows, etc...
25. No problem with diversity, but no need to display. CA and OC only.
26. Do NOT include racist teachings of the 1619 Project. ABSOLUTELY do NOT include racist teachings of Critical Race Theory. Racist teachings like these have NO PLACE at the OC Fair.
27. No
28. Please keep the Pride flag. LGBTQ residents of the OC feel excluded everyday seeing our flag helps us to feel like part of the community.
29. Being fair to ?all? groups with a display but not at the front where people might go nuts for example if they see a patriotic flag for example
30. Exhibits honoring the experiences of the minority communities would be fabulous.
31. speaking for myself, I hate to be "force fed" into accepting anything not of my choosing. Whatever you do for diversity, make it something VOLUNTARY, (I.E. African-American Day, Hispanic Day, Asian Day, Gay Day, Military Day, etc.) That way, people like me won't feel like we are FORCED to participate; we can if we chose! Thank you!
32. if you want true acceptance you shouldn't have to make a focal point of any of them
33. "I think that we should only fly the Flags that represent this State, this Country period!
34. To fly flags that represent any groups or organizations, that aren't directed related to these will only open up a can of worms. Because then this group, or that group is

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

going to want to be flown also, and say that your discriminating against them if you don't!

35. The Fair Ground, Swap Meet should not be involved in promoting a culture surrounded by BEING P.C.!
36. TAKE ALL OF THE OTHER FLAGS DOWN, REPRESENT THIS STATE, THIS COUNTRY ONLY!"
37. Not at this time
38. Why do I have to log in to do a survey that benefits you.
39. celebrate with intention and meaning, rather than just to check off boxes, and do so without inadvertently minimizing other groups
40. How about reaching out to the Arabic, Persian, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Japanese, Vietnamese and other communities which live in OC. It's disgusting the Fair Board is taking up the issue of removing the Pride Flag at the behest of Calvary Chapel.
41. Be considerate to all cultures and not just special interests.
42. Let it happen organically. No forced, artificial diversity. Also, PLEASE stop using the latest buzzword ?equity?. It means equality of OUTCOME, which requires completely unamerican, socialist measures to be achieved. YES to equality, fairness and equal opportunities for all.
43. Heros Hall
44. I appreciate the Fair's consideration of its OC patrons. It's my hope that one day, we won't feel slighted if who we are, who we love or where we come from isn't overtly depicted in exclusive recognition. The fair has always done such a great job of celebrating all the people, animals, interests and history of Orange County, and creating a place we can all come to learn more about all of it. Keep up the good work! Thanks for all you do.
45. More accommodations for elderly and disabled,, grounds are full of uneven walkways and areas that are dangerous to the elderly.
46. Displays and performances by various groups is enough.
47. Stop virtue signaling
48. Instead of having a Vietnamese Day or similar, what about an Asian American celebration where vendors, artists, entertainers and especially food is celebrated? Maybe partner with 626 Night Market or UCI & CSUF so it is authentic and not forced.
49. Celebrate history months.
50. Open the swapmeet
51. Stay out of politics and don't single out special groups of people. Keep the fair welcoming to ALL people of all races and cultures without having to celebrate certain ethnicities, races or cultures unless you are able to do ALL, which is impossible. You will ultimately end up offending some group that didn't get the special attention and possible causing more hurt than good.

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

52. I think you guys do an excellent job of celebrating diversity and don't think you need to do more.
53. By trying to celebrate our different cultures and what makes us different you open an unending door of singling out specific groups making other groups feel less appreciated. Why can't we aim to celebrate what we have in common - which is we are all Americans.
54. Have a huge multicultural food, dance and music and art, and culture education and info, that is representative of the County.
55. These are all great ideas !
56. allow each group to have their own events at the fairgrounds
57. On the flag issue: Flying flags for subgroups in today's political environment may only serve to promote division. If we are to ever unify as a country we can't allow identity politics to consume our landscape. American flag, California flag, OC logo flag. The end.
58. Make Special events available for those interested in participating.
59. Open up the swap meet already.
60. Keep things going forward with positive actions to reflect the cultural changes as they are current .
61. We do not think the pride flag should be flown.
62. "i think that disney's ""it's a small world"" does it best...or the song by robert palmer..""Every Kinda People"" or even more fun..""People Are People"" by depeche mode
63. in keeping with our overall farm theme it's true that farmers are all over the world growing and raising every kind of food to feed every person in the world..it's a theme in of it's self <3
64. Celebrate America. You will never be able to satisfy all the possible subgroups that seem to come and go based on the current political climate.
65. Contact all agencies and non profits including the Senior Centers..
66. "I think the Orange County Fair has done a great job over the years - in covering our diverse cultures - having been the past President of the California China Painters Art Association and displaying our member's work we were able to talk to everyone who came up to our booths - and in walking around the Fairgrounds - could see only smiles on everyone's face - and to me this meant - they were not worrying about who you were - or where you came from - BUT were happy to be sharing the Fair with you and enjoying all the food, displays, etc. Keep up the great work Gwen Streit - "
67. America, not sub groups, one group!
68. As of yesterday everything is history. People need to realize it, deal with it, move on. Too many cultures in OC so a Unity Flag might be nice.
69. Wish OCFair Pride was online!!
70. Consider an annual parking pass.

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

71. I feel your doing a great job as is Thank you for this opportunity and continue honoring all of the Let me groups of banners flags and employees
72. Tou should be multi ethnic performance and exhibits .
73. Support police and represent the thin blue line permanently
74. Stop separating people by race or gender or sexuality. It's incidental to who people are, not determinative.
75. Add food trucks to the fair.
76. Orange County Fair is about gathering with like-minded people from the communities of Southern California. People from Japan, Viet-Nam, Mexico and all over have choose to make a better life here. Better food selections at the fair besides fried Oreo cookies should be represented. More Farmers should be represented as food hero?s that grow our food. Science could also be represented in a better way. Get kids thinking about the future.
77. Please continue to have the drive up food pantry for the communities in need, and also continue to find creative ways to have events that are fun, culturally diverse and safe during this pandemic.
78. We are all Americans & should be proud of that! Calling out diversity creates more division, we should all come together under the American flag, no matter our skin color or sexual orientation. Singling out race & gender discriminates against white heterosexual folks.
79. open,open,open!
80. Be open and communicate that by not flying one flag or another your group is not diminishing its importance, only that its impossible to show solidarity with every subgroup that deserves it. I wish there was a single flag that could communicate that we are a community that honors and respects tolerance and diversity in all its varied forms. Live, let live, and let's live in peace. Ha! I think I might put that on a T-shirt.
81. I believe it has become impossible to represent all of the special groups in our Country without leaving someone out. My hope is for our laws, citizens, education organizations, etc. strive to fully live, practice, enforce, facilitate the laws, traditions and codes of ethics to treat all with so much equality that less people need to be 'protected' by a special flag, arm band, etc. It is the main foundation of our Country and if we don't we will loose it.
82. "We really missed OC Fair in 2020!
83. Hoping to visit this year."
84. We are naturally diverse and get along fine. We don't need contrived reminders to force the issue. All of that looks ingenuine. Diversity doesn't need to be celebrated - it just needs to be left to "be".
85. I'd like to see special events to celebrate cultures/communities. For example, I came from Ohio and we had events at the fairgrounds like the Italian festival and and Irish

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

- festival. These were a ton of fun- I would like those, and I would imagine other people would enjoy festivals specific to their heritage too.
86. Its fine juat the way ot is no need to change anything
 87. Representation matters. Kids and families and adults need to see that the LGBT community is a valuable contributor to OC. Representation matters.
 88. Good Behavior - Decency - Respect for All??
 89. Keep the Pride flag!
 90. Keep the Pride flag!
 91. America but it's own definition IS diversity and stands for diversity. We need to reminded of this and not seek to try change it because it hasn't changed - it's been forgotten.
 92. Keep it CLEAN FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT. If people want something different, make something new! Dont change our fair!!!
 93. Celebrate diversity through events, exhibits, etc but let's unite as country, state and county.
 94. Next to celebrate other cultures us to invite different cultures to perform & show case their culture at events. Only racist people have to show that they are not racist by displaying flags or whatever year round.
 95. Use good sense and be careful to avoid division, exclusion. I'm not in favor of 'permanent installations' for the fair but food, displays, and items for sale would be great. Similar to what is done at cultural festive throughout the county
 96. Hire more diverse people.
 97. Promoting, supporting and encouraging diversity in OC is great, thank you for working on this.
 98. Overpriced food.
 99. You do not have to change stay as you have been
 100. The beauty of the OC Fair is that embraces agriculture and a simple way of life that is naturally inclusive and family friendly.
 101. Not at this time
 102. "Sorry I cannot help. I love OC Fair??????So I?m not sure ? and with so many cultures How do you pick one !! Good luck ? "
 103. You can never please any one group or person at any given time. Everything should neutral so that everyone can enjoy keep everything family friendly.
 104. Stop the madness by asking. All people matter. All people have a story, it's impossible to keep up on each... Instead, treat everyone as a human that matters.
 105. Celebrations is wrong - appropriate recognition like many other things in people's lives
 106. DISPLAY AMERICAN PRIDE FLAG ONLY.
 107. We are one people in America - unity, not diversity-I feel that everyone is included in the American Flag. We all live in America right! People need to stop being so darn sensitive!

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

108. Love the Oc fair
109. Have sections of the Fair dedicated to different cultures whether it be food, events or vendors of merchandise and events
110. I Liked the OC Fair the way it was , I missed going to it in 2020 , If its NOT Broke ,,,, Dont Fix it
111. I miss the fair . Keep the fair about agriculture and farm animals . All people can can come together and enjoy the fair.
112. Maybe stop trying to point them all out. By elevating some you squash others. We're all just people at the end of the day, who all live in proximity to each other.
113. USA and state flag covers all!
114. I think however you choose to recognize the various groups within the County it should rotate and not give any one group special privileges or honor. Or just keep those things that include us all. Thank you so much!
115. please include the European culture. I know my culture (German/Irish) has been diminished thru the years
116. Make a "Small World" Ride or exhibit that celebrates every group, subgroup, and individual and animal.
117. Is the fair happening this year?
118. I love the idea of year-round cultural festivals that highlight food, art, entertainment from other cultures and communities of Orange County. There should also be diversity in vendors in terms of "local business" and "national business". Post-pandemic recovery - small businesses, now more than ever, need the help and it keeps the revenues local.
119. Looking forward for it to open
120. It is inappropriate to single out any groups for preferential treatment. it is not the Fairgrounds? responsibility and absolutely ought not be it?s agenda to promote any subgroups there are white concrete bollards around the facility that have flag pole holders in them. Maybe fly all flags that get presented. There are plenty of locations.
121. Have food that is not ridiculous prices. It is shameful how expensive it is the eat anything at the fair. Food trucks could bring in cultural food and sell it at the regular prices. It would be better food and at an affordable price.
122. I think more history on the region and displays to educate the community about our heritage.
123. Society is over saturated with groups which think they need more representation and exposure. Let's unify as a melting pot society without highlighting or singling out specific groups.
124. I think the idea of even doing a survey shows that you care & it's wonderful.
125. If your going to do it you must be fair to all
126. I miss the fair. Went into fair withdrawal due to the cancellation this year. :-(
127. Just try to include everyone.....don't just focus on one group.

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

128. I'm pretty sure this is unnecessary.
129. I use to really enjoy the ?Mariachi?s Day? of some years ago. However, I am a Big Fan of the OC Fair! I truly missed it this year! ?
130. Bring back the swap meet
131. All the separate flags will cause group after group to start making noise to be counted. Keep the US, California And OC Fair flags
132. I feel that every culture is represented by who I see attending. It is very diverse. It's fun and you shouldn't change anything.
133. The only identify we have and need is already established in E Pluribus Unim. Any other attempt to describe our nation is an insult intended to divide us and to destroy us.
134. No
135. I hope the fair will open this year..
136. Bring back better concerts to Pacific Amphitheater. Stop the ?wanna-be? bands and hire actual bands like you use too! We have been going forward over 35 years and have seen some changes and definite pricing increases. Make things more affordable for families. We Love the OC Fair. It was our first date back in the 1980s!
137. I'd really like to see more food, performances, etc from groups like India, Indonisa, MiddleEastern, Yemen, Ethiopia (sorry for my spelling in a hurry), all countries. It's not just a black, white, brown and asian country.
138. None
139. I think that you should offer monthly cultural events that coincide with monthly happenings. I believe by offering such events more inclusion will occur.
140. The OC Fairgrounds would be best to steer clear of virtue signaling and identity politics.
141. remind people that the American flag represents all people, which is why we don't need separate flags for subgroups or for "unity".
142. Keep it ALL equal & true!
143. Stay Strong!
144. I like the idea or show casing cultures and inviting people in to learn and experience, but i do not believe in shoving it down their throats. For example, I am Latino/Hispanic but I do NOT fly the Mexican or Spanish flags. I am an American and that is what units us all. We are also Californians and we live in Orange County, again things that unit us. Fly other flags that divide us I think counter productive. Yes, lets share our diversity with show cases and invite people in but lets NOT fly all sorts of flags that divide us. United we stand, divided we fall! Lets stand united and be strong.
145. Irvine does a world day festival. It would be great if the OC Fair hosted one. But I love that you have the OC Night Market, The Tet Festival and Japanese Festivals. You bring diverse events for people to attend

OCFEC Community Affairs Survey

- 146. Do not see the need to focus on the pride flag over other groups! Especially those that are native to the area & community!
- 147. Since the area was at one time a military instillation, I highly recommend display of all military flags especially since you have an installation with exhibits. There are many individuals (of all cultures) who were/are military. I also provide the Stars for the troops and would be happy to provide these to present in your facility. I also work with Scottishfest>
- 148. education seminars or recurring running videos scattered through the park - more ethnic foods instead of junk would be great, maybe with culinary demonstrations
- 149. all great ideas

From: Carol Nilsen [<mailto:cznilsen@gmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 11:58 AM

To: OCFINFO

Subject:

My name is Carol Nilsen. I live in Orange County. I am contacting the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee in **support** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds. It is an important symbol of inclusion in our county, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally. It means a lot to me and my family to see the Pride flag at the fairgrounds. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Carol Nilsen

From: Michelle Bentcliff [<mailto:micbent@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 4:55 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Diversity Committee / Pride flag

Hello Committee Members-

My name is Michelle Bentcliff. I've lived in Orange County for almost 20 years. I am contacting the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee in **support** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds.

It is an important symbol of inclusion in our county, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally. It means a lot to me and my family to see the Pride flag at the fairgrounds.

Thank you for your consideration. Appreciate it,

Michelle Bentcliff

-----Original Message-----

From: Laurie Girand [<mailto:lbg@beyondmarketing.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 5:35 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: LGBTQ Flag

Dear OC Fairgrounds Board,

I am a citizen of Orange County, and I have attended varied events at the Orange County Fairgrounds, including hearing Trevor Noah speak, attending the fair, and attending the Scots Festival.

One must assume that flying an LGBTQ flag above the fairgrounds is intended to express that LGBTQ people are welcome, as are people of all different backgrounds and heritages, such as Trevor Noah, who was born into Apartheid, which specifically targeted Black and other people to limit their rights. For any citizens to try to make anyone--other than those who promote violence or wish to restrict the rights of others--feel unwelcome at the County Fairgrounds is to suggest that our County Fairgrounds do not belong to all of us.

As my foster son once said, "The PRIDE flag is about love." People who oppose unity and would instead choose to divide us based on the idea that they can restrict others rights have no moral authority under our Constitution. It is important that the Fairgrounds stand for all of us, united as one county, in all its diversity.

Laurie Girand

From: Jeff Brumett [<mailto:jeffbrumett@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 6:45 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Keep Pride Flag

My name is Jeff Brumett. I live in Orange County. I am contacting the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee in **support** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds. It is an important symbol of inclusion in our county, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally. It means a lot to me and my family to see the Pride flag at the fairgrounds. Thank you for your consideration.

Sent from myMail for iOS

From: Kelly Oconnell [<mailto:kelly.oconnell19@gmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 10:13 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Diversity Flag

My name is Kelly O'Connell. I live and work in Costa Mesa, Ca (Orange County). I am contacting the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee in **support** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds. It is an important symbol of inclusion in our county, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally. It means a lot to me and my family to see the Pride flag at the fairgrounds. Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly

From: Katarina M Scheck [<mailto:kataring@uci.edu>]

Sent: Sunday, January 17, 2021 7:01 AM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride Flag

My name is Katarina Scheck and I live in Orange County. I am contacting the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee in **support** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds. It is an important symbol of inclusion in our county, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally. It means a lot to me and my family to see the Pride flag at the fairgrounds. Thank you for your consideration.

From: Harry Huggins [<mailto:harry1948.hh@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, January 17, 2021 4:39 PM

To: OCFINFO

Cc: Gordon Gardener; Ken Koehler; Brian Fisk; Michelle Bentcliff; Alan S. Miller; Mina Brown; Beth Leeds; Craig Cooley; DON GUNN; Toshi Fujimori; Fred Subia; David Hendryx; Shaena Stabler; Theresa Sears; Gabriela Worrel

Subject: Support Flying the LGBTQ Colorful Flag at OC Fairgrounds

Your Board of Community Affairs Committee should vote to fly the LGBTQ flag next to many other flags that represent this community.

To remove the flag or avoid flying is a step backwards, a set back to the progress that has been made in recent years to accept a diversified community in the OC. The fairgrounds are for everyone in Orange County and should be representative of the many cultures that exist here.

Harry Huggins 949-400-5221

From: Melanie Weir [<mailto:melanie.weir11@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 5:01 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Don't take down the Pride Flag

I do not want to see the Pride Flag removed. This flag is a symbol of hope and acceptance: Life, healing, sunlight, nature, harmony and spirit are the meanings of the colors. I prefer the flag that also includes the black and brown stripes of diversity and inclusivity.

I can see no good reason to take a step backward in our recognition of LGBTQ rights.

Melanie Weir
Orange, CA

From: Joni Nichols [<mailto:jonibnichols@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 9:19 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Agenda item #6 flag

To the Board of OC fairgrounds

When I spoke with a neighbor this morning to express my concern that the rainbow flag was even a subject of discussion, he nodded and said, " I agree we need to support gay rights."
No dear neighbor (no matter how well intentioned your comment)...not gay rights....equal rights!

At such a decisive time in our country, the rainbow--an iconic symbol of the LGBTQ community -- needs to continue to fly over the Fairgrounds to celebrate inclusivity, diversity and unity.

Sincerely
Joni Nichols
Newport Beach resident

-----Original Message-----

From: Stephanie Sandoz [<mailto:sandozpsych@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 9:53 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Rainbow flag

Our family of five absolutely loves the beautiful, welcoming Rainbow flag at the fairgrounds. The 8 words are welcoming and non-threatening. If they offend anyone, that is solely their issue and such intolerance has no place in today's society. We embrace a live and let live attitude, as long as everyone is respectful of thy neighbor and our planet. We understand the flag is an agenda item at your upcoming board meeting. Please do not allow racist, homophobic bullies to intimidate you. Please continue to fly the wonderful flag.

Many thanks,
Stephanie Sandoz and family

From: Svetla Alexandrov [<mailto:2svetla@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 10:18 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Support of Pride Flag at fairgrounds

Hello-

My name is Svetla Alexandrov and I live in Ladera Ranch here in Orange County. Could you help connect me with the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee? I am writing in **SUPPORT** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds.

This is really important to me and my family. The pride flag represents acceptance and inclusion of all of our neighbors, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally.

Thank you in advance for taking this into consideration.

Take care,
Svetla

From: John [<mailto:jnhnichols123@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 10:23 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: In support of flying the rainbow flag at the fairgrounds

I admire the Board for flying the rainbow flag.
It unites our community rather than divides and we are stronger for it.
My wife and I have been US citizens since birth, homeowners in OC since 1994, full time residents since 2009.
Keep the flag flying.
Thank you.
John H. Nichols
213 Diamond Ave.
Newport Beach, CA 92662

-----Original Message-----

From: Maxine Maly [<mailto:mstomber@aol.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 11:02 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Rainbow flag

To the board of the OC Fairgrounds:

I am writing in defense of keeping the rainbow flag flying. As a mother of a gay son, it means a great deal that our community reflect inclusive values. Please do not be bullied by bigots and homophobic individuals & remain on the right side of history.

Thank you.

Maxine Maly
Balboa Island

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Maly, Rose C., M.D. [<mailto:RMaly@mednet.ucla.edu>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 11:09 AM
To: OCFINFO
Cc: Maxine Maly; James Maly Stomber
Subject: Rainbow Flag

I am writing to you to urge you to fly the rainbow flag to signify inclusivity.

Thank you.

Rose C. Maly, MD

Professor Emerita

David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Dvorak [mailto:susan_dvorak@hotmail.com]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 11:11 AM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride Flag

OC Fairgrounds Board:

I write to express my support for flying the Pride Flag at the OC Fairgrounds.

The Pride Flag is a symbol of inclusion, acceptance, kindness and love, which we could all use more of in these difficult times. Please keep the flag flying.

Thank you,
Sue Dvorak
Newport Beach

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Roll [<mailto:rollmary@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 11:23 AM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Rainbow Flag

I support the flying of the rainbow flag. Orang County must be an inclusive, accepting place to live and work.

Mary Roll
Newport Coast

Sent from my iPhone

From: Justin Massey [<mailto:justinsmassey@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 12:33 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Feedback - January 20 LGBTQ+ Pride Flag

Dear OC Fair Board of Directors,

Thank you for your community service and dedication to overseeing the OC Fair in such a way that promotes the community and brings us together. I appreciate the attentiveness to ensuring diversity is recognized and celebrated.

I grew up in South Orange County and currently live in Aliso Viejo with my partner of 5 years. I was bullied relentlessly as a student in middle school and high school because of my sexual orientation. Lack of representation and absence of symbols of support intensifies the abused LGBTQ+ youth face. It excuses

injustices for those who commit them and creates a perception of a community that would support discrimination based off of immutable characteristics like sexual orientation or gender identity.

It's been a joy to see the OC Fairgrounds and City of Costa Mesa celebrate my community which is vibrant but historically marginalized. Flying the LGBTQ+ rainbow pride flag is a small, but important step in proclaiming our community as one that celebrates and uplifts all its members. I urge you to not only keep the pride flag flying, but also explore other ways to collaborate with the LGBTQ community and celebrate our diversity through programming and other means.

Thank you for listening to the comments of the residents most impacted by these decisions.

Sincerely,

Justin Massey

--

Justin Massey

Orange County, CA

949-973-0878 | JustinSMassey@gmail.com



-----Original Message-----

From: Ann Marie McKay [<mailto:annmarie.socal@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 12:37 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride Flag

We need to move forward, not backward. Displaying the Pride flag encourages diversity and inclusion; it does not show preference to a "special interest group." It does not put one religious view over another. It says we, as a county, view all as equal.

Best,

Ann Marie McKay

Laguna Beach, CA

From: Brad Dixon [<mailto:brad.austin.dixon@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 2:36 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Keep the Rainbow Flag

Subject says it all. Please keep the rainbow flag.

Thanks,

Brad Dixon

2233 Fairview Rd Apt M

Costa Mesa, CA 92627

From: Stomber, James [mailto:james_stomber@alumni.brown.edu]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 2:51 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Support of Rainbow Flag

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to urge you to keep the rainbow flag flying to show your commitment to inclusivity. Giving in to the demands and bullying of bigots, who feel threatened by the basic rights of marginalized Americans, only opens the door to more hatred and discrimination for these American citizens. Despite what these bigots may suggest, there is no "zero sum game" that exists in the domain of human rights -- the inclusion and protection of LGBT americans does NOT affect them nor detract from their own rights and privileges. I would hope that the organizers at OC fair are intelligent enough to understand this.

Best wishes,
James

-----Original Message-----

From: Marie Martin [<mailto:martin.art@mac.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 3:27 PM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: LGBTQ flag

I understand that the OC Fairgrounds Board has received complaints about the Rainbow flag, a symbol of hope for the LGBTQ Community. It is item #6 on the agenda for Wednesday, Jan 20th.

I would be offended and angered if this symbol was not permitted. It's about inclusion. Caring. Understanding. Removing stigma. Growth. Moving forward. A seat at the table for everyone.

I'd hate to think OC is so backwards that it cannot see the greater purpose and greater need for this.

Keep the LGBTQ flag. Let love and caring win the day. It's time.

From: Annette Szlachta [<mailto:annetteszlachta@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 4:49 PM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: January 20, 2021 meeting

To Mr. Robert Ruiz and Mr. Nicholas Kovacevich,

I read with interest in the Voice of OC about the flying of the LGBTQ Pride flag at the OC Fair and community reaction to it. I am unfortunately unable to attend your remote meeting on 1/20/21, but I offer my opinion for the record via this email.

I support the OC Fair's flying the Pride flag and in the spirit of diversity, equity, and inclusion, I suggest flying the following flags as well: the Black Lives Matter flag for racial justice, the Planned Parenthood flag for women's health care equity, and in support of fellow Orange County resident Ferin Kidd, founder of Black OC, the Bang4Change Unity flag. Flying these flags is a step toward recognition of the importance to our society of groups who have suffered and continue to suffer from discrimination and marginalization in the United States: nonwhites, women, and LGBTQ. People from these groups attend the fair, so let's celebrate all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Annette Szlachta-McGinn
Dana Point, CA

-----Original Message-----

From: Julie Colombero [<mailto:momoluke1@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 8:02 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride flag

Hello!

I support the fairground's continued effort to display the pride flag.

Important to show that that members of the LGBTQ community feel welcomed by the community. This impacts all races and cultures. I am an ally.

Thank you!

Julie Colombero

Aliso Viejo

From: Philip Lee [<mailto:plee218307@sbcglobal.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 9:05 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Comment for Diversity and Representation Workshop: Affirming the LGBTQIA Community

I would like this statement shared at Wednesday's Workshop on Diversity and Representation.

To Director Ashleigh Aitken and the Board of the OC Fair,

Born and raised in Orange County, I grew up at the OC Fair attending rehearsals as a member of The All American Boys Chorus, and performing every summer on its stages. As a teen, my very first job was running a booth at the OC Fair. Given that the OC Fair has played such a significant role in my life, I was so proud to learn of the OC Fair's initial decision to fly the Pride Flag on the fairgrounds. In a time of divisiveness, the Pride Flag represents hope for unity and healing in our community. When visitors to the OC Fair see the flag, they will know everyone, no matter your race, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and gender identity is welcomed, and the fair will provide a safe gathering place for all visitors. People who mention flags for the Little League or Christian groups do not understand the point of uplifting groups of people who are historically marginalized. LGBTQIA members experience higher rates of suicide, depression, and violence acted against them. The OC Fair represents our community. Flying the Pride flag is a community stand against discrimination and a stand for love and acceptance for all people. Taking down the flag is akin to remaining silent to the historical harms done to a group of people in our community. It's easy for organizations to play it safe, stay neutral during this time of divisiveness. But it's even more critical for organizations to show courage and send messages against hate and discrimination during this time. Orange County is a beautiful place, even made more beautiful by its diverse community. The LGBTQIA community is not a special interest. It is a community within our Orange County community. I earnestly ask the OC Fair to keep flying the Pride flag in celebration of all who live in this community.

-Philip Lee

Tustin Resident, Elementary School Teacher, and Member of the Orange County Gay Men's Chorus

From: Lara Horgan [<mailto:larahorgan@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 9:13 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride Flag

Dear Members of the OC Fair Board,

By the time my grandmother passed away, at age 98, her memory had nearly gone. She repeated the same few stories, over and over. They were stories of the times that had been indelibly etched, not just in her mind, but in her heart and soul.

I have a story like that, it's a story that I will never be able to forget. It is a wound in my heart that will never heal.

My brother, Blake, was brilliant. He taught himself to read and write before he arrived at school, by watching Sesame Street and Electric Company. At the age of 9, Blake was publishing his own newspaper, with subscribers all over the neighborhood and the family. In middle school, he made his own 3-D movies, and he dreamed of being the next Stephen Spielberg. Blake was witty and handsome, honest and good. Blake was also gay, though he hid his feelings until he was 30 years old. When he finally told me he was gay, I could hear the fear in his voice; the fear of being rejected. He had been rejected over and over, being called, "faggot" and even being beaten; his nose broken.

Then, one day, the fear and shame became too much. I got the call that my little brother had taken his life as I was getting ready to pick up my sons from school. I collapsed on the floor as I heard that he had wrapped his belt around his neck and hung himself in his bedroom. How long, I wondered, did he struggle for breath until he lost consciousness? How great must have been the pain of living that he chose an agonizing, early death, instead. What could I have done to take that pain away? What could I have done to make up for the fact that our society had labeled him a deviant who deserved to be mocked, ridiculed and beaten?

LGBTQ youth are four times more likely to seriously consider suicide than their peers. The Pride Flag is so much more than a flag. It is a sign to people like my little brother. It is a sign that says, "we see you, you are welcome here". It says, "your life is worthwhile". The sight of the Pride Flag might cause some discomfort to those who have never struggled with the feelings I have described. But how can one compare that minor discomfort to the agony suffered by those who feel rejected by society? How can that minor discomfort compare to the devastation of losing a loved one?

Please do not remove the Pride Flag from the OC Fairgrounds.

Sincerely,

Lara Horgan

-----Original Message-----

From: Mali Workman [<mailto:maliworkman@me.com>]

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 9:26 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: LGBTQ+ pride flag

As Orange County residents, we would like to request that you DO NOT remove the LGBTQ+ pride flag from OC Fair grounds.

Thank you,

Mali and Brian Workman

From: Andy King [<mailto:mabmking@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 11:51 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Pride flag

Leave the Pride flag flying at the fair grounds.

Andy King
Placentia CA since 1976

-----Original Message-----

From: Jessica Welch [<mailto:jess.k.welch@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 12:04 PM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: LGBTQ Pride Representation

Hello,

I am writing in response to the LGBTQ Pride Flag which is being debated at your Wednesday meeting. The flag was created in response to Harvey Milk, a Californian gay rights advocate. This makes the pride flag not just a representation of lbgtq rights and equality but a symbol for our great state as a beacon of equality, diversity and respect. I understand that your consideration of removing the flag is due to unsupported belief the flag may discourage some from attending to the fair. I would argue that if someone was that stirred to not attend the fair because of a flag, their bigotry and bias against fellow Orange County residents is a bigger concern. There is nothing decisive about this flag. Human rights are not special interests. It's even more concerning that you would take a public committee for diversity and dissolve it before any function could be executed. Orange County is getting a reputation of being a hostile place and this only continues to established that Orange County welcomes only some which is contrary to who we are as a nation and state. I urge you to think about this history and spirit of our state, as a place for unique and diverse individuals rather than a place of fear and hatred . Be on the right side of history.

Thank you

-----Original Message-----

From: Eve Brown [<mailto:evelyn.k.brown@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 12:07 PM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Do Not Remove The Pride Flag!

OF fair -

Come on. Do not remove the Pride Flag. This is an inclusive city that I am proud to call home. I am a straight woman with a family and would be upset, offended and disappointed by the flag's removal. Please continue to uphold high standards of decency, acceptance and inclusion.

Evelyn
11 year Costa Mesa resident

From: Kelli Bourne [<mailto:kellibourne@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 12:42 PM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Keep pride flag up!!

Hello,
Keep the pride flag up!!!!

LGBTQ+ persons are not “special interests” - they are humans whose representation matters.

Hate crimes in OC are on the rise. Please don't contribute to any dehumanization efforts aimed at marginalized and at-risk communities.

Lowering the pride flag would do just this.

Sincerely,
Kelli Bourne, Ally
Laguna Niguel

From: Robert Casas [<mailto:robert@prideoc.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 1:11 PM

To: OCFINFO

Cc: board@prideoc.com

Subject: Pride Flag at OC Fairgrounds

To the Board of Directors at OC Fairgrounds,

In June of 2019, we received the news that the Pride flag was going to be raised at the OC Fairgrounds and our entire board and community was ecstatic. Within days of it being raised, it was stolen and through resilience and care it was raised again only to show the community that inclusivity and love would rise above divisiveness and hate. I remember feeling full of hope and pride that so many wonderful organizations, including the fairgrounds, had recognized the equality that so many of us are continuing to fight for.

As word is continuing to circulate of a survey to remove the flag, it would be a lie to not say how disappointed and saddening the question of its removal is. We have come so far only to be possibly taking major steps back based off a survey that was not pushed to more open minded individuals who reside in our community. The Pride flag goes beyond the rainbow colors and the image of a gay symbol and represents inclusivity, love and representation for a large group of individuals that have been rejected in so many ways.

I would urge you to please consider the continued support of the LGBTQ+ community by leaving the Pride flag as a symbol of that support. I have had the joys of speaking with many Board Members of the Fairgrounds and I hope that we can continue partnerships in the years to come.

With Pride,

Robert Casas
he/him/his

President

Orange County LGBT Pride | #46-2510006

www.prideoc.com | robert@prideoc.com



300 S Harbor Blvd, Suite 804
Anaheim, CA 92805
p) (714) 204-8040

-----Original Message-----

From: Andrea Pappas [<mailto:andreapappas1@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 3:03 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride flag

Hello, the pride flag should remain. This flag shows equal Representation for all people and needs to stay.

Andrea Pappas.

From: Rubenstein, Eliza [<mailto:erubenstein@occ.cccd.edu>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 3:14 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride flag at Fairgrounds

Hello!

I live near the OC Fairgrounds, I teach at Orange Coast College, and I walk my dogs to Tewinkle Park regularly--so I see a lot of the Pride flag that flies at the Fairgrounds, and I can honestly tell you that it fills me with warmth every single time. Yes, it's a small and symbolic thing, but especially during the turmoil and pain of the last four years, it's been a colorful and constant reminder that I live in a city where I'm the equal of all my fellow citizens, and where my relationship is valued and honored.

It would be a kick in the stomach to have it taken down now because of the discomfort of a handful of homophobes. I've read their arguments; they all boil down to nothing but fear and ignorance and a need to feel special.

May we please keep moving forward toward greater understanding, and away from fear. Thanks for reading.

Best,

Eliza Rubenstein

Director of Choral & Vocal Activities & Music Department Chair, Orange Coast College

(714) 432-0202 x21072 / erubenstein@occ.cccd.edu

Visit our new website!: www.occmusic.com

From: Lis Sos [<mailto:lisette.sosa@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 3:41 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Removal of LGBTQ+ pride flag survey

The OC Fair's recent survey just came to my attention. Later than the window opening for taking the survey, and taking this time to send you a note to make my position heard.

The following are some points to take into consideration as you look over your survey:

- The framing of the questions as the Fair Board received comments that flying the rainbow pride flag is a "slippery slope" to promoting "special interests" is like saying flying the flag is promoting inclusivity, diversity and justice for all and how can we promote that? How is it that in this day the interest of inclusivity is a question? The flying of this flag is even more needed given the context of our current political climate of silencing those who are marginalized and highlighting the need for such signs of

diversity and inclusivity. I am sure those diverse cultures would not question or fight against the symbol of inclusivity. It makes me question from where these special interest groups questioning or flying the flag are coming from?

- The framing of the response to the first question is biased as well. To avoid "singling out of subgroups" is framed as a the flag being a negative. This is erroneous. The answer could have been framed as "but remove the Pride flag." And the other option of keeping "the current flag and no others as the Pride flag represents inclusivity of others as is." The responses in themselves are biased.

- - Question 2- Who does not want these items to be part of the entire OC Fair? This should have been a ranking question on level of importance. Not which is the winner.

Overall the question of including diverse flags is causing division is a twist on the idea that the need for them is to represent inclusion not division. Many of the comments are stating including diverse flags causes division. The need for this flags is symbol of being pro-active on our part as being inclusive, and recognize that the reality of our current political climate is one of division and silencing.

I am a resident of OC County and look forward to returning to the OC fair in the near future.

Thank you for your attention.

Listete Sosa

714-315-3305

From: Caitlin Elizabeth Sammons [<mailto:hi@caitlinelizabethsammons.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 4:14 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: In support of Pride Flag at fairgrounds

My name is Caitlin. I live in Orange County. I am contacting the Orange County Fairgrounds Board of Community Affairs, Diversity Committee in **support** of maintaining the Pride Flag at the fairgrounds.

It is an important symbol of inclusion in our county, especially for people who do not have the same legal protections as everyone else nationally.

It means a lot to me and my family to see the Pride flag at the fairgrounds.

Thank you for your consideration and for doing the just thing.

-

Caitlin Elizabeth Sammons

caitlinelizabethsammons.com

-----Original Message-----

From: marycarterlaguna@msn.com [<mailto:marycarterlaguna@msn.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 5:02 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride flag

Please remember that there is lots of support in orange county to fly the pride flag.

Mary Carter

Laguna Beach

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Meyer [mailto:su_meyer@hotmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 5:11 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Support the PRIDE Flag

OC Fair Board and Cultural Committee,

I write this email in support of flying the LGBTQ PRIDE Flag. I am a 60 year resident of Orange County currently living in Newport Beach. The OC Fair Board made the correct decision to proudly fly the PRIDE Flag. I ask the Board continue to fly the PRIDE flag and not cave into people who are unable to embrace diversity and equality.

Sincerely,

Susan Meyer
18 Surfside Ct
Newport Beach, 92663

From: Paul Gonzales [<mailto:paulg120@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 6:02 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: PLEASE KEEP FLYING THE PRIDE FLAG!

When the OC Fair began displaying the Pride flag, it was a simple but deeply meaningful acknowledgement of Orange County's diverse LGBTQ community. The Pride flag tells us that the Fair is a place where all are welcome. I hope the Fair Board will keep in mind the role that the Pride flag plays as a symbol that the OC Fair is a safe and inclusive event. Please keep the Pride flag flying at the OC Fair!

Thank you,

Paul Gonzales
Santa Ana

From: Danett Abbott [<mailto:danettabbott2@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 6:14 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: LGBTQ+ Pride flag

The OC Fair is considering removing the LGBTQ+ Pride flag. Ironically, discussion about this decision will take place, January 20 at a workshop exploring "diversity and representation" at the annual fair.

In a public survey, the Fair Board received comments that flying the rainbow pride flag is a "slippery slope" to promoting "special interests." This is outrageous and we're asking all equality-minded Democrats to speak out! Let the Fair Board know that flying the Pride flag lets all visitors know that the Fair is a welcoming, inclusive environment and encourage them to keep it flying.

Danett M. Abbott-Wicker

Progressive Democrats of America
PDA-CA, Field Coordinator

From: Karen Hight [<mailto:karen@karenhight.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 6:41 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride flag

To whom it may concern,

Again the religious right is projecting their "values" onto a public venue who choose to be inclusive.

The flag needs to stay and anyone offended by it is an extreme homophobe.

Thank you,
Karen Hight

-----Original Message-----

From: Larry Gates [mailto:larry_gates@sbcglobal.net]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 6:50 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride flag at OC Fair

It's come to my attention that there is discussion on whether or not to raise the LGBTQ Rainbow flag at the OC Fair this year and going forward. As an out gay man and resident of Santa Ana, I request that the flag continue to be flown. We have worked hard over many decades for our rights as citizens of this country and county. It has been a hard-won fight. It helps to have visibility for our community. In particular, it's important for young people, many of whom are struggling with their own sexual identity, to see support to help them through the difficult process. The act of flying the Pride Flag could actually save lives!

Thank you for reading my email. I hope the conclusion is the OC Fair to remain inclusive and to continue to fly the Pride Flag. Orange County can use more examples of including all of our citizens.

Thank you!

Respectfully,
Larry Gates (Registered J. Lawrence Gates) Resident of Santa Ana, CA

From: Luis Huang [<mailto:luismhuang@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 8:37 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Fwd: OC Fair Board - Pride Flag

Please keep the Pride Flag at OC Fair thank you.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Luis Huang** <luismhuang@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Jan 19, 2021, 10:09 AM

Subject: OC Fair Board - Pride Flag

To: <scervantes@ocfairboard.com>

Cc: <bbagneris@ocfairboard.com>, <aaiken@ocfairboard.com>, <dlabelle@ocfairboard.com>, <nrubalcavagarcia@ocfairboard.com>, <npham@ocfairboard.com>, <ruiiz@ocfairboard.com>

Dear Chair Cervantes and esteemed members of OC Fair Board of Directors,

I am writing today to ask for the OC Fair Board to continue support of LGBTQ+ representation.

I firmly believe the LGBTQ+ community is a strong component of the greater OC Community, and flying the Pride Flag is a significant act of signifying inclusion to celebrate all diversity of all in our community.

One of my college friends, for reasons only he would know, chose to take his own life. I will forever be haunted and will forever live in regret and sorrow, knowing that I did not do everything I possibly could to make sure his sexual orientation was respected and accepted and treasured as his identity.

I cannot sit idly by if I can help continue our progress of LGBTQ+ acceptance and inclusion and embracement.

Thank you.

Luis Huang
949-591-9089

From: Felicity [<mailto:felicitynf@aol.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 9:13 PM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Keep the PRIDE Flag flying!!

Dear OC Fair Directors:

In light of the fact that there have been several anti-LGBTQ+ incidents at the Fairgrounds, I think it's important that members of the LGBTQ+ community feel safe and comfortable there. For that reason, I believe you should continue flying the Pride flag since that lets all visitors know that the Fair is a welcoming, inclusive environment where everyone is treated equally.

Thank you --

Felicity Figueroa
OC Fair Attendee

-----Original Message-----

From: Andre Jones [<mailto:jones.andre95@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 12:51 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Proud LGBTQ OC Resident!

To whom it may concern,

I write to say as a member of the LGBTQIA community and someone who has spent over a decade attending the OC Fair and the OC Marketplace. I've attended Pacific Amphitheater concerts since I was a child.

When I see it flying somewhere, I think that place is likely a safe place for me & my family. Anyone who complains that the flag excludes them is simply homophobic as the rainbow is meant to represent inclusivity not exclusivity.

To remove the flag based on "community" complaints sends a message that you can be bullied into censorship of equal ideals. Those are not MY American values, and I hope you stand up for LGBTQ+ folks in our community. To me, that is the true way to "love your neighbor," and that is what I would say to anyone claiming to be "Christian," yet complaining about a flag.

Moreover, I read that the diversity committee has not had a chance to meet during COVID. Give it a chance!

In case you are interested, the colors in the flag were selected for their meaning: red for life, orange for healing, yellow signifying sunlight, green for nature, indigo for harmony, and violet at the bottom for spirit. That makes me like it even more.

Thank you!

Andre Jones
Tustin/Santa Ana Resident
Foothill High School Graduate
UCLA Class of 2017
Age 25

January 20, 2021

TO: Chair Kovacevich, Member Ruiz
CC: Orange County Fair & Event Center (OCFEC) Board Members

RE: Support Flying The Pride Flag at Orange County Fairgrounds (Letter Attached To Email)

Dear Hon. OCFEC Board Members,

Writing to you on behalf of many concerned Orange County residents and patrons of the Orange County Fair, we would first like to commend your board's historic vote in May, 2019, to fly the LGBT Pride flag at the OC Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa.

Rather than step backwards, we ask you to continue flying the LGBT Pride Flag at the OC Fairgrounds in our city. The LGBT Pride Flag is an apolitical symbol of inclusion and safety that is often displayed as a sign that anyone can feel safe and secure as themselves without judgement or persecution. This is exactly why our local Costa Mesa City Council majority, elected with a resounding mandate from the voters, has taken similar action to fly the Pride flag annually in commemoration of Harvey Milk Day and LGBT Pride month.

The LGBTQ Community includes people from every political party, religion, ethnic group and/or cultural community. Regardless of our orientation, all of us have loved ones in this community, and they should be cherished and celebrated by Orange County. We hope that you will continue to show the OC Fair's commitment to inclusion and safety for all the members of our community by flying the Pride flag.

Sincerely,



Cassius Rutherford
Chair - Costa Mesa Demoratic Club Executive Board

We are the City of Costa Mesa's chartered chapter and political action committee (PAC) of the Democratic Party of Orange County working to organize and elect Democrats at every level of government.

cmdemclub@gmail.com
costamesademocrats.org

From: COMM DEPT
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 8:44 AM
To: OCF Executive
Subject: Pride flag feedback

I write to say as a straight, white ally, I have always felt included by the rainbow flag. Indeed, when I see it flying somewhere, I think that place is likely a safe place for my family. Anyone who complains that the flag excludes them is simply homophobic as the rainbow is meant to represent inclusivity.

As an advocate for LGBTQ+ kids in public schools as co-chair of the Orange County Equality Coalition's School Compliance Task Force, I have seen the types of acts in our county that lead directly to suicide attempts among these youth, not to mention the recent cold-blooded murder of Blaze Bernstein in a local county park. The very sad fact is that LGBTQ+ youth are *not* safe in all parts of our county. They should be. Flying the so-called "pride" flag lets them know that the fairgrounds are a safe place for them. Moreover, it lets everyone know that it is a safe place for everyone. For where the most marginalized are safe, so are others.

To remove the flag based on "community" complaints sends a message that you can be bullied into censorship of equal ideals. Those are not MY American values, and I hope you stand up for LGBTQ+ folks in our community. To me, that is the true way to "love your neighbor," and that is what I would say to anyone claiming to be "Christian," yet complaining about a flag.

Moreover, I read that the diversity committee has not had a chance to meet during covid. Give it a chance!

In case you are interested, the colors in the flag were selected for their meaning: red for life, orange for healing, yellow signifying sunlight, green for nature, indigo for harmony, and violet at the bottom for spirit. That makes me like it even more.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

~ Gialisa Gaffaney

Community leader, parent, and teacher

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Waters [<mailto:msimply3@aol.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 12:00 PM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Pride Flag

Hi,

Please don't remove the Pride Flag on your grounds. It is important to make sure people in the LGBTQ community feel included and until we can take for granted that they are indeed included we must take extra steps to show we support their rights as much as everyone else.

Thank you and be well,

Melissa Waters and Jon Light
Laguna Niguel

From: Craig Cooley [<mailto:craig@lagunabeachpride.org>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 4:26 PM

To: OCFINFO; Michelle Volz; Jonathan Colliflower

Subject: OCFEC Board Community Affairs Committee Workshop – January 20, 2021

Dear OCFEC Board Members,

We, Laguna Beach Pride 365, Inc. a nonprofit Orange County organization are writing to you to express our sincere support for the continued flying of the Rainbow Flag of Diversity at the fairgrounds entrance and offices.

It is our hope that by sharing an expression of diversity and inclusion that our world is a better place, kinder place and healing with compassion.

Sincerely,
Craig Cooley
President

From: beverly@majykequipe.com [<mailto:beverly@majykequipe.com>]
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 8:30 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: Keep the Pride Flag Flying!

Hello:

As a local business owner, just wanted to say how much we appreciate your decision to keep the Pride Flag flying. Ignorance and prejudice will never beat inclusion and love. We are so grateful that you have not bowed to the voices of a few out of touch bigots - just like our congress didn't bow to the voices of a few radicals. We can never let these few trample the voices of others.

Thank you very much for representing Orange County in such a respectful and inclusive way. :)

Beverly Pollington Sirjani
Majyk Equipe LLC
30021 Tomas Street #300
Rancho Santa Margarita
CA 92688
1855 GO MAJYK (1855 466 2595)
info@majykequipe.com
'Believe in Majyk'



From: Mini bikes and Dinghys [<mailto:joesnance@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 10:38 AM
To: OCFINFO
Subject: keep OC progressive

Hello, my name is Joe Nance, I heard that hate groups are pressuring the OC fairgrounds to take down the pride flag. I just wanted to do something and tell you guys to stay strong and don't take down the pride flag because that is one step in the wrong direction. Thank you for reading this.

Thank you,
Joe Nance

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeffrey Littell [<mailto:frajeffrey@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 22, 2021 6:26 AM

To: OCFINFO

Subject: Fairgrounds flags

I'm not anti-gay or anti-anything else for that matter. I'm in favor of equality for all human beings.

That being said, I don't like a flag representing a particular sexual lifestyle to be appropriate to fly at our fairgrounds. This is simply in poor taste and is offensive.

I will boycott the fair and the fairgrounds until the rainbow flag is removed. I will encourage my friends to do the same.

Let's return to a standard of decency for ALL and not favor ANY one group.

Many thanks,
Jeffrey Littell
Costa Mesa



January 20, 2021

TO: Chair Kovacevich, Member Ruiz

CC: Orange County Fair & Event Center (OCFEC) Board Members

RE: Support Flying The Pride Flag at Orange County Fairgrounds

Dear Hon. OCFEC Board Members,

Writing to you on behalf of many concerned Orange County residents and patrons of the Orange County Fair, we would first like to commend your board's historic vote in May, 2019, to fly the LGBT Pride flag at the OC Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa.

Rather than step backwards, we ask you to continue flying the LGBT Pride Flag at the OC Fairgrounds in our city. The LGBT Pride Flag is an apolitical symbol of inclusion and safety that is often displayed as a sign that anyone can feel safe and secure as themselves without judgement or persecution. This is exactly why our local Costa Mesa City Council majority, elected with a resounding mandate from the voters, has taken similar action to fly the Pride flag annually in commemoration of Harvey Milk Day and LGBT Pride month.

The LGBTQ Community includes people from every political party, religion, ethnic group and/or cultural community. Regardless of our orientation, all of us have loved ones in this community, and they should be cherished and celebrated by Orange County. We hope that you will continue to show the OC Fair's commitment to inclusion and safety for all the members of our community by flying the Pride flag.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Cassius R.", is positioned above the printed name.

Cassius Rutherford

Chair - Costa Mesa Democratic Club Executive Board

We are the City of Costa Mesa's chartered chapter and political action committee (PAC) of the Democratic Party of Orange County working to organize and elect Democrats at every level of government.

cmdemclub@gmail.com | costamesademocrats.org



CITY OF COSTA MESA

77 Fair Drive | P.O. Box 1200, Costa Mesa | California 92628-1200
Phone 714.754.5285 | Fax 714.754.5330 | www.costamesaca.gov

From the Office of the City Council

January 20, 2021

Michele Richards, CEO
OC Fair and Event Center
88 Fair Drive,
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Dear Ms. Richards,

We urge you and the Community Affairs Committee to continue to support members of the LGBTQ+ community by flying the Pride flag at the Orange County Fair and Event Center. Now more than ever, historically marginalized groups look to governing bodies for support and inclusion. Flying this flag helps show those in our community that their rights are protected and that they are safe.

Our City Council has similarly made efforts to advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, voting to fly the Pride flag for the first time at City Hall in May 2019. This symbolic display showed our commitment to diversity, tolerance, inclusion, and equal rights for all groups within our community. We hope that you and the Community Affairs Committee will likewise continue to make this commitment to serve and recognize minority groups in our community.

Respectfully,

Mayor Katrina Foley
Mayor Pro Tem Andrea Marr, District 3
Council Member Loren Gameros, District 2
Council Member Manuel Chavez, District 4
Council Member Arlis Reynolds, District 5
Council Member Jeff Harlan, District 6

MAYOR Katrina Foley <i>At Large</i>	COUNCIL MEMBER Don Harper <i>District 1</i>	COUNCIL MEMBER Loren Gameros <i>District 2</i>	MAYOR PRO TEM Andrea Marr <i>District 3</i>	COUNCIL MEMBER Manuel Chavez <i>District 4</i>	COUNCIL MEMBER Arlis Reynolds <i>District 5</i>	COUNCIL MEMBER Jeffrey Harlan <i>District 6</i>
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Matthew Pearce

2956 Player Ln
Tustin CA 92782-1531
matt@pearce.com

January 18, 2021

Board of Directors
OC Fair & Event Center
88 Fair Dr
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Dear OC Fair Board of Directors;

Regarding the recent active discussion around flying the rainbow pride flag at the fairgrounds: I was proud of you when your organization decided to affirm the safety and rights of LGBT people. As a representational organization, it made me feel more welcome in Orange County overall, and want to invest more time in the community events offered at the OC Fair and Event Center. It worked - as a queer person, I see the OC fairgrounds as a more welcoming place.

I write to discourage a trend I'm seeing when I read news reporting about the ongoing discussion, and possibly coming from communications of the board.

Flying flags outside the fairground isn't about other groups' representation or the representation of other groups — this is about what the OC Fair wants to represent. If it's an external flag, of another organization, cause or belief - it is meaningless if it is not what the OC Fairgrounds wants to represent for itself. When you flew the pride flag, you signaled that your organization was affirming the LGBT struggle for equal rights. When you fly other flags, it should not be as a rotational space for others to represent - this represents you. No matter what you chose to fly, nothing will change that.

I hope you use that space to continue sending positive messages of inclusion and progress - further inviting more of the community into the fairground space.

Sincerely,



Matthew Pearce, PhD



May 23, 2019

PROCLAMATION AND RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
32ND DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION REGARDING LGBTQ PRIDE
MONTH AND DISPLAY OF THE RAINBOW LGBTQ PRIDE FLAG

WHEREAS, the mission of the 32nd District Agricultural Association (the "District") is the celebration of Orange County's communities, interests, agriculture and heritage;

WHEREAS, the District recognizes and affirms the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community as one of the communities that make up the fabric and heritage of Orange County;

WHEREAS, in fulfilling its mission, the District is proud to celebrate the LGBTQ community;

WHEREAS, June is observed across the United States as a month to commemorate the Stonewall riots, which took place in New York fifty years ago (in June 1969), and to celebrate the LGBTQ community and the history of the LGBTQ civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the District recognizes the rainbow LGBTQ pride flag as a symbol of welcoming and inclusiveness of the LGBTQ community specifically and of all diverse communities generally;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the District hereby proclaims June as LGBTQ Pride Month at the OC Fair & Event Center;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the District hereby reaffirms the principles of diversity, inclusion, and nondiscrimination as core institutional values of the District and the OC Fair & Event Center;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby reaffirms its policy prohibiting discrimination by the District on the basis of any characteristic protected by law, and, in proclaiming LGBTQ Pride Month at the OC Fair & Event Center, expressly notes that this prohibition applies to discrimination against any person on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby directs that the rainbow LGBTQ pride flag be flown year-round alongside all official flags that are displayed on the District's property, as a symbol of the District's belief in the equal dignity of all persons who visit the Fair's grounds and of the District's commitment to welcoming and including people of all backgrounds and identities to the OC Fair & Event Center.