

May Day March and Celebration
May 1, 2016
Human Rights City Alliance Statement

On international workers day we remember and honor the sacrifices of human rights defenders of the past, whose vision and sacrifices improved the lives of so many of us.

But there is still much work to do, not only to build on the achievements of the past but to defend and protect these gains. The experiences of our immigrant brothers and sisters especially show that we have a long way to go to achieve dignity and justice for all people.

The most basic lesson of history is that rights are never given to us by the powerful, they must be fought for. And once achieved, we must continue to struggle to defend and protect our gains. Today we re-commit ourselves to this struggle.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Junior once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." If one group of people is denied their rights, the rights and protections many of us take for granted are at risk. Societies where racism and discriminatory notions of citizenship deny people's full enjoyment of their economic, social, cultural and political rights are deprived of the vibrancy and creativity that diversity brings. They also lack the unity and solidarity needed to address today's urgent environmental and social challenges.

In 2011, Pittsburgh became the fifth Human Rights City in the United States. We want this designation to be a meaningful one. We all need to play a role in helping lead the way to a world where human rights don't end at national borders, and where governments are not allowed to pick and choose which rights and which groups they protect. We are part of a global human rights movement that knows that the people must lead to make human rights a reality.

We are here today not just to celebrate the history of this day, but to build our movement for solidarity, human rights and dignity in Pittsburgh and beyond. We are honored to be part of this gathering and we look forward to working with you all in the days and years ahead, until we have a city where we have dignity and justice for *all of us*.