

Profile

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Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity: Submitted

Tyler S Blackmon
First Name Middle Initial Last Name

[Redacted]
Email Address

Select Your Ward

Ward 2

Select Your District

District 9 - West Seventh

[Redacted] [Redacted]
Street Address Suite or Apt
[Redacted] [Redacted]
City State
[Redacted] [Redacted]
Primary Phone Alternate Phone

Interests & Experiences

Minnesota DFL Finance Director
Employer Job Title

Why are you interested in serving on a board or committee?

I love Saint Paul. But I also know that without more young people stepping up to have a voice in our local government, our voice may be drowned out. After working on many local projects in the last couple of years, I'd like to step up my involvement in my community by serving on the HREEO Commission to ensure that Saint Paul is indeed the welcoming city we so often claim it is.

What skills/training or experience do you possess for the committee(s) for which you seek appointment?

I've been organizing for equal rights for the last six years across a spectrum of issues, ever since I had a bit of an epiphany about how we treat each other as Americans. Pairing both electoral and legislative advocacy, I have seen how both good and bad ideas have worked their way into policy and how people with authority can use their power to improve or impede other people's quality of life. As someone who has both applied for several different jobs and subsequently been responsible for hiring others, I have seen employment decisions up close and how the potential for discrimination can fester without proper disinfectant. As someone who rents here in the city, I have seen the housing crisis up close. I understand the perspective of renters who are trying desperately to find a place to live in a city without sufficient housing and the discrimination that can accompany a housing application. Finally, as a queer Saint Paulite, I have endured the constant barrage of discrimination against my community but also the hope that has come with increased legal protections over the last decade.

Upload a Resume

Question applies to Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity

The Saint Paul HREEO Commission seeks candidates with strong community involvement experience. Briefly describe your background that relates to the purpose and work of the Human Rights Commission. Include details of work and involvement in human rights and all work that might contribute to the mission of the Human Rights Commission.

On June 26, 2015, I was working from home at an internship in Washington, DC when the news came: The Supreme Court of the United States of America had just declared marriage a fundamental right for same-sex couples in every state in the Union. Having grown up in Georgia, this meant for the very first time I could legally marry the person I loved in my home state. I spent the day celebrating at the steps of the Supreme Court, and I share this anecdote because that day will forever be my most potent reminder that when boards, commissions, and policymakers so desire, they can permanently make the world a better place for other people. Among the many projects I've worked on include working to enshrine affirmative sexual consent standards on college campuses into state law, fighting for the rights of undocumented students to have access to institutional financial aid, arguing for juvenile justice reform, and, of course, working every day to move the issue of full equality for LGBTQ+ Americans forward - an unfinished task even today.

What do you see as crucial issues facing our community, and briefly explain why?

Closest to my heart is the issue of fairness in housing. Renters in Saint Paul are facing an affordable housing crisis with just a 2% vacancy rate in the city, creating a tightness in the market that leaves tenants vulnerable to discrimination. This pressure in the housing market is exactly why Sec. 183.06 of the Saint Paul legislative code is so important. With scarce housing available to tenants, we need a strong HREEO Commission who will vigilantly look out for the rights of all protected classes outlined in the Human Rights ordinance. As someone who has been responsible for personnel decisions, I also care deeply about creating a Saint Paul free of employment discrimination (Sec. 183.03). Even in places like Saint Paul, we must remain vigilant to continued discrimination against people of color, LGBTQ+ residents, and other protected classes, a crucial part of allowing any Saint Paulite to climb into the middle class. A key part of that, of course, is ensuring that public sector hiring practices are reflective of our diverse community. Finally, Saint Paul in particular is in the middle of a much-needed conversation about racial equity. Minnesota has one of the largest racial wealth gaps in the country, and we need to think critically about why those inequities exist.

Please describe your present and past community involvement which are applicable such as voluntary, social, city, church, school, business, and professional. Include dates of involvement, and any offices or leadership positions held.

Before moving to Minnesota, I worked for Georgia Equality (2013), a non-profit dedicated to advancing the rights of LGBTQ+ southerners in a time when we desperately needed that kind of advocacy. Now that I am here, I have begun to be involved in the Fort Road Federation as we plan for what we'd like to see our community look like in the future. For many years, (2012-2015), I also served as a volunteer tax preparer for low-income tax filers, a role that gave me a close view of how high-level tax policy can have real financial effects on the lives of so many people.

As part of your duties as a HREEO Commissioner you may be called to serve on a panel regarding fair housing issues. Please describe your experience, if any, working on fair housing issues? Note: lack of experience will not preclude applicants from serving.

In multiple settings, I have testified in front of planning commissions and the City Council to urge city leaders to build more housing to meet the growing demand of our city. But more than anything, I believe it is my perspective as a renter that will be most helpful for my time as a commissioner. I am living the reality of a landlord-tenant relationship every day and have very recently gone through the process of applying for apartments.

List any skills, knowledge, or perspectives that would serve the Human Rights Commission's ability to meet its mission and further the work of its committees.

We need a commission that is reflective of Saint Paul. As potentially one of the youngest members of the commission, I hope to be a voice for young people in decisions about employment, education, and housing discrimination. And as a proudly gay Saint Paulite, I will be happy to offer perspective about how LGBTQ+ people navigate public accommodations in Saint Paul. My final note would just be that compared to other applicants, it's likely I have fewer years of experience with my community. I would encourage you to think critically about how that kind of comparison can be de facto discrimination against young people serving on these boards and commissions.

Demographics

Ethnicity

Caucasian/Non-Hispanic

Gender

Male

05/08/1994

Date of Birth