



## Policy Resolution: Dignity and Civility in Local Politics Resolution Number: 2023-001

(A) Resolution on the Need for Dignity and Civility in Local Politics

(B) We, the members of the Utah League of Cities and Towns, find that:

1. WHEREAS, the cornerstone of a healthy democratic process is respectful and constructive discourse, even when we disagree, among elected officials, community leaders, and the public they serve; and
2. WHEREAS, the recent rise in divisive rhetoric and hostile behavior in public discourse has led to increased polarization and a decline in public trust in all levels of government; and
3. WHEREAS, the leadership and membership of the Utah League of Cities and Towns recognizes the importance of fostering an environment of dignity and civility within political discourse to encourage meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and problem-solving; and
4. WHEREAS, Governor Spencer Cox, who is the 2023-2024 chair of the National Governors Association, has initiated a bipartisan initiative called "Disagree Better" for governors to work through conflicts and seek solutions to difficult policy challenges; and
5. WHEREAS, elected officials at the local level play a crucial role in shaping policies that directly impact the lives of their constituents; and
6. WHEREAS, the Utah League of Cities and Towns acknowledges that upholding dignity and civility in local politics is essential to maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of local government and we strive to lead by example in "disagreeing better" and promoting dignified communication.

(C) Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. Disagree Better: We strive to disagree better in order to facilitate difficult conversations, resolve conflicts, and build consensus to solve our policy challenges.
2. Code of Conduct: We suggest that municipalities consider adopting a code of conduct that sets expectations for elected officials' behavior during public meetings, social media interactions, and other forums where political discussions take place. The code of conduct could also apply to how members of the public interact in public meetings.
3. Training and Education: We promote resources for elected officials, staff, and community members on effective communication, conflict resolution, and strategies to promote dignity in political discussions.

4. Dignified Dialogue: We encourage all elected officials and stakeholders to prioritize dignified dialogue over divisive language and to actively listen to different perspectives in order to solve policy problems.

5. Public Awareness Campaign: We support initiatives that raise public awareness about the importance of dignity and civility in local politics, emphasizing the need for collaborative problem-solving and the rejection of divisive rhetoric.

6. Recognize Positive Role Models: We acknowledge and celebrate local leaders who exemplify the values of dignity, civility, and “disagreeing better” in their political interactions.

(D) Be it further resolved, that copies of this resolution be sent to all member cities, metro townships, and towns, inviting them to endorse and implement these principles and practices within their respective communities.

Adopted on this 8<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

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