March 30, 2017

Dear Mayor McQuaid, City Manager Crumly and City Council members:

Thank you for your resolve for Albany to become a Sanctuary City. We commend your initiative to expand and strengthen the initial resolution. We appreciate the City Council’s decision on March 20th to create a forum for community engagement to shape Albany’s resolution.

We hope that the participatory process can provide an opportunity for community members and City leadership to collaboratively identify and refine our core values, goals and social justice vision for our Albany. ACA strongly hopes that engaging in this collaborative visioning process can form the foundation for future community-building and social initiatives.

We look forward to participating in the April 5th community meeting. ACA is promoting the meeting so that a diversity of stakeholders who were not able to attend the March 20th City Council meeting are informed about the upcoming community discussion.

The rise of recent hate speech and incidents in Albany as well as oppressive federal immigration policies, is creating deep distress in our local community. Coming together as a community at this critical point in time is a poignant affirmation of our collective dedication to uphold civil rights, protect immigrants and other targeted groups, and express the mutual care at the core of Albany’s social fabric.

In the spirit of community engagement and as requested by City Manager Crumly, we have attached ACA’s in-progress draft of our comments on your updated resolution. Although we have made our suggested amendments within the existing draft resolution format, ACA asks that the City consider and be prepared to discuss how it can make these principles binding on all city employees and enforceable by community members who experience violations of the policy. Further comments, questions and refinements may arise during the April 5 meeting when we have an opportunity to have a dialogue with you, City staff and other community members.

Please feel free to contact Bonnie Wolf at 510-206-1225 or Julia Mass at 510-385-4214 with questions regarding ACA’s response. Julia, in addition to being a member of the Albany community, is a senior staff attorney at the ACLU of Northern California and has helped to develop the attached recommendations with an understanding of applicable federal and state law. Bonnie, who has a Masters in City Planning from MIT and advises nonprofit strategic growth, would be pleased to meet with you with other ACA members to discuss how to effectively engage the broader community to develop a social justice vision for Albany.

In the spirit of community engagement and per direction by City Manager Crumly, we have attached ACA’s in-progress draft of our comments on your updated resolution.

We look forward to crafting a strong and meaningful sanctuary city resolution that can successfully be presented and adopted as soon as feasible.
Thank you again for your commitment to making Albany a sanctuary community.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Wolf and Julia Maas
On behalf of Albany Community Action