


CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

**INTRODUCED BY CITY ATTORNEY BARBARA J. PARKER,
MAYOR LIBBY SCHAAF, CITY ADMINISTRATOR EDWARD D.
REISKIN, COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIKKI FORTUNATO BAS,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE SHENG THAO, AND
COUNCILMEMBERS LOREN TAYLOR AND TREVA REID**

**RESOLUTION CALLING ON MICROSOFT CORPORATION TO
ALLOW USERS TO DESIGNATE THEIR PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN
THEIR MICROSOFT TEAMS' USER PROFILES**

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland is committed to upholding and furthering the rights, protections, dignity, and inclusion of all of its residents and City staff; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland has one of the highest concentrations of LGBTQ+ people in the United States, and is estimated to have the greatest percentage of transgender and nonbinary persons of any other metropolitan area in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the City Council passed Resolution No. 88320 C.M.S., establishing a policy to conduct City affairs in a manner that uses gender-inclusive language, including non-gendered language and gender-neutral pronouns where appropriate; and

WHEREAS, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the City has relied heavily on Microsoft Teams ("Teams") to operate and transact business on behalf of the people of Oakland as many City employees work remotely to protect their health and safety; and

WHEREAS, unlike many of the nation's other online meeting platforms, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Slack, and Zoom, Teams does not allow users to designate their pronouns in their user profiles; and

WHEREAS, the unavailability of a pronoun option on Teams creates a meeting environment that is not conducive to inclusivity of all users and is particularly unwelcoming to people who are non-binary, transgender, or gender-non-conforming; and

WHEREAS, California’s State Fair Employment and Housing Act regulations require that employers honor an employee’s request to be identified with a preferred gender, name, and or pronoun and to accommodate changes in an employee’s name and pronoun usage; and Microsoft’s failure to include a pronoun option in Teams impairs employers’ ability to fulfill this legal requirement; and

WHEREAS, Microsoft users have been calling on Microsoft Corporation to add a pronoun option since at least 2020, but Microsoft has failed to provide this option; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2022, the Mayor, City Administrator, and City Attorney sent a letter to Microsoft Corporation Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella urging Microsoft to add an option for Microsoft Teams users to designate their pronouns in their user profiles; and a copy of that letter is attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, Microsoft has failed to respond to this request despite the passage of more than two months; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: The City Council calls on Microsoft Corporation to immediately add an option allowing users of Microsoft Teams to designate their personal pronouns in their user profiles; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City Council directs the City Administrator or their designee to send a copy of this Resolution to Microsoft Corporation Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella with a cover letter.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, KALB, KAPLAN, REID, TAYLOR, THAO AND
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____
ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

CITY OF OAKLAND



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April 1, 2022

Via Email: Satyan@microsoft.com

Satya Nadella
Chief Executive Officer
Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, Washington 98052

**Re: Lack of Option for Users to Designate Their Pronouns in Their
Microsoft Teams User Profiles**

Dear Satya Nadella:

The City of Oakland has been a Microsoft customer for many years. We are calling upon Microsoft Corporation to allow users of Microsoft Teams to add their pronouns to their user profiles. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 the City has relied heavily on Microsoft Teams to operate and transact business on behalf of the people of Oakland as many of our employees work remotely to protect their health and safety. It has recently been brought to our attention that Microsoft Teams, unlike Zoom and Slack, does not allow users to include their pronouns in their user profiles.

Oakland is proud to have one of the highest concentrations of LGBTQ+ people in the United States, and Oakland is estimated to have the greatest percentage of transgender and nonbinary persons of all metropolitan areas in the United States. In 2020, the City Council established a policy to conduct City affairs in a manner that uses gender-inclusive language, including non-gendered language and gender-neutral pronouns where appropriate. The policy encourages, but does not require, that employees include their pronouns in their email signatures and other correspondence.

The lack of a pronoun option on Teams creates a meeting environment that is not conducive to inclusivity of all users and is particularly unwelcoming to people who are non-binary, transgender, or gender-non-conforming. It requires users to make assumptions about others' pronouns which can be both awkward and offensive. The lack of a pronoun option on Teams sends a harmful message to our City staff by indicating that they are not welcome to bring their full selves to the table.

Satya Nadella, Chief Executive Officer

April 1, 2022

Re: Lack of Option for Users to Designate Their Pronouns in Their Microsoft Teams User Profiles

Page Two

Moreover, California's State Fair Employment and Housing Act Regulations require that employers honor an employee's request to be identified with a preferred gender, name, and or pronoun and to accommodate changes in an employee's name and pronoun usage. Microsoft's failure to include a pronoun option in Teams impairs employers' ability to fulfill this legal requirement.

There have been many calls online for Microsoft to add this function, including on Microsoft's Community Forum. According to Microsoft's February 12, 2021, pronouns option functionality is "under review." However, as of March 3, 2022, no update is available.

It is very concerning and indeed shameful that Microsoft, a corporation that claims to have progressive and inclusive employment policies, has failed to add a pronoun option to Teams. We urge you to immediately correct this deficiency and join the long list of platforms that have adapted their technology to include this important feature. While users may not be required to add their personal pronouns, they should at least have the option to do so. This is the bare minimum required to foster an environment that is inclusive and respectful of people of all gender identities.

We urge you to stand on the right side of history and take seriously this very important request

Very truly yours,



LIBBY SCHAAF
Mayor



EDWARD D. REISKIN
City Administrator



BARBARA J. PARKER
City Attorney