

CCCC Statement on the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO)

The CCCC Officers and Executive Committee share the outrage and concern over the framing and ultimate rejection of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance, or HERO. The campaign urging voters to reject this important ordinance employed despicable argumentative techniques. The political rhetoric used in this situation demonstrates that language can be used for socially just causes, or for deplorable outcomes. Words do things (to people), a principle that lies at the heart of the CCCC mission. As a strategy and a tool, CCCC endorses the use of rhetoric to craft arguments and present them for reasoned deliberation so that rational judges can compare and evaluate claims. The anti-HERO campaign represents the kind of discriminatory actions that writing, rhetoric, and composition teachers and researchers have long decried.

We see the presence of CCCC 2016 in Houston as an opportunity for CCCC members and attendees to express our positions on this important issue -- and to engage the convention's theme, "Writing Strategies for Action," to make our presence known. Working with the local host committee over the past 12 months, we have developed collaborations with local Houston organizations who will be present at the convention in a number of ways; we are in the process of reaching out to these groups and others to learn how we might strategically contribute to their efforts. The local guide to Houston, already under production, will make special note of businesses and restaurants who actively supported HERO. CCCC caucuses and interest groups are also in communication with local Houston organizations to plan additional activities. As these take shape in the coming weeks and months, we will publicize them so that all members may find productive outlets to use writing as one of many strategies for action on this important issue.