

My name is Rev. Stevie Wakes. I am the Pastor of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas, where I have served for over 33 years. Our church is located in northeast Wyandotte County on 7th Street Trafficway, a main thoroughfare in Kansas City, Kansas. I will not try to preach to you about God's command to treat strangers and neighbors with love and justice. However, I am very proud of our Mayor, Tyrone Garner and the Wyandotte County Commissioners who supported and passed Safe & Welcoming. I realize that one of our commissioners who voted against the ordinance served as one of our state representatives in our state capital. It seems that Tom Burroughs, like some other leaders, cannot accept defeat. A multitude of civic, governmental, religious and social service organizations support Safe & Welcoming and we, the people of the great state of Kansas, need real representation in the capital and all areas where decisions are made by all elected officials. What we who support this measure really need is a clear understanding as to why any rational thinking human being would oppose Safe & Welcoming. Safe & Welcoming does not violate any state or federal law, but simply provides identification for undocumented persons who already live in our city. Unless you can place yourself in their shoes, you cannot understand what one needs to feel safe and welcome. The undocumented told us what they need to feel Safe & Welcome and Kansas City, Kansas, along with other municipalities, gave them what they asked for. It seems that the main concern for those who oppose Safe & Welcoming is fear of the unknown. In order for real dialogue to occur, we need those who oppose this measure to provide concrete reasons why they oppose Safe & Welcoming or stop fighting the multiple Kansas supporters who they are supposed to represent.