

US

Michigan city bans all Pride flags from public buildings claiming LGBTQ+ people are ‘already represented’

Jun 15 • Written by Jake McKee

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A city in Michigan, US, has voted to ban LGBTQ+ flags from public property. (Matthew Chattle/Future Publishing via Getty Images)

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Pride

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Officials in a small city near Detroit, Michigan have unanimously voted to ban LGBTQ+ flags from public buildings, under the guise of religious freedom.

The vote by the Hamtramck City Council on Tuesday (13 June) came after three hours of public debate, with a majority of comments submitted by email and read out by a council clerk at the meeting being in opposition to the resolution, calling it backwards and bigoted.

The ruling, which also banned flags with racist and political views, had previously been introduced by council member Mohammed Hassan.

The [Detroit Free Press](#), which identified the city council as being the only all-Muslim Michigan city council in the US, reported that before Tuesday's vote, Hassan blasted critics of the resolution in a speech for not respecting the views of local residents.

Speaking to opponents of the resolution at the meeting, Hassan told them they were "the ones making problems".

"Please don't threaten us ... I'm the elected official," he said. "I'm working for the people, what the majority of the people like."

Fellow city councillor Nadeem Choudhury said LGBTQ+ people should respect Muslim sensibilities and that the move was about respecting the religious rights of people in the area.

As reported by the Detroit Free Press, he said LGBTQ+ people "are welcome" in the Michigan town, but questioned "why do you have to have [the flag](#) shown on government property to be represented?"

"You're already represented. We already know who you are ... By making this [about] bigotry ... it's making it like you want to hate us."

Mayor Amer Ghalib was quoted saying the council served "everybody equally with no discrimination, but without favouritism", going on to claim half of his "boards and commission are either LGBTQ, or supporters of LGBTQ".

Detroit Free Press reported that LGBTQ+ people and allies spoke strongly against the resolution at the meeting, arguing it would push them out of town and reduce investment in the area, which was known for its immigrant and artistic communities.

One woman, who wore a clown nose while she spoke, said the city should change its slogan to Hamtramck "welcomes you if you're straight" and then proceeded to kiss the woman next to her.



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After the vote, state senator Stephanie Chang, a Michigan Democrat, released a statement on social media in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

“Please know that you have many allies throughout the city **and state**, and that includes me,” she said. “You are loved, you are welcome and you are valued.”

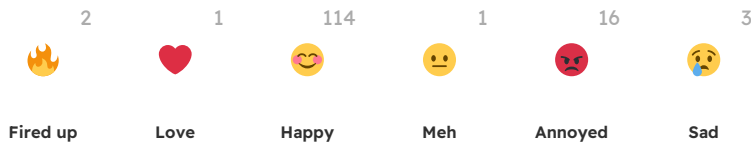
Chang added that she hoped Hamtramck could move “forward in a positive direction toward equality and freedom, not move backward toward division and fear”.

“I urge Hamtramck community organisations and leaders to continue to show their support to the LGBTQ+ community. I am proud to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community and will always proudly display a Pride flag in my office.”

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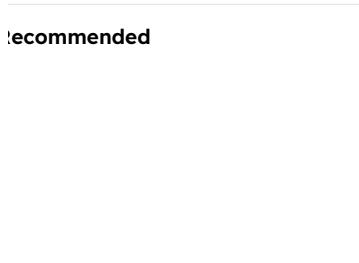
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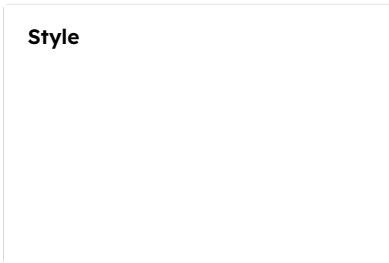




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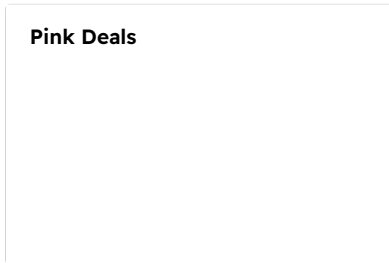
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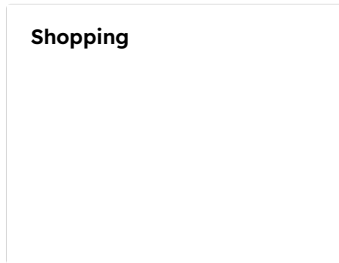
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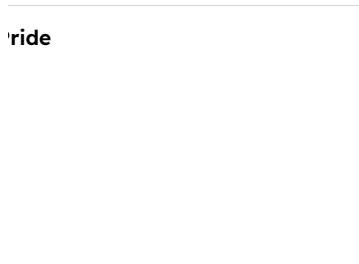
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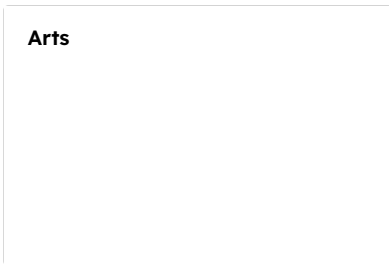
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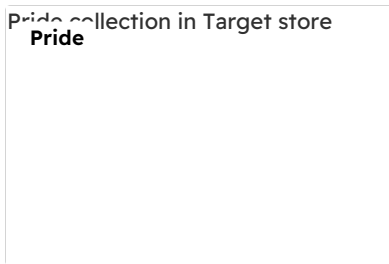
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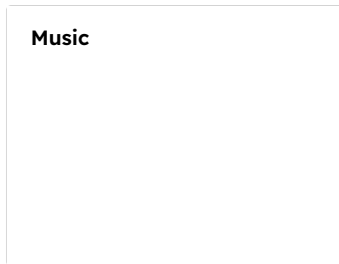
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