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October 18, 2013

Mayor Kooiker/City Council
City of Rapid City
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

Re: Human Relations Commission

Dear Mayor Kooiker and City Council Members:

I am an attorney in Rapid City, and a member of the South Dakota Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. As you may recall, I was one of the co-founders of the Community Relations Council which was formed years ago between the City, the Mayor, law enforcement (Chief of Police Craig Tieszen and the Pennington County Sheriff Don Holloway), and leaders in the American Indian Community. This was a very successful joint effort that reached across racial lines and gave community members a way to be heard about complaints they had against law enforcement. The members at that time believed that this has a measurable effect upon community relations in Rapid City, and in lowering the number of incidents of violent conflict between law enforcement and the American Indian Community. Unfortunately, this dissolved in recent years, prior to the loss of the police officers.

I understand that the Mayor and City Council are now considering giving new life to the Human Relations Commission, or some variation of that. I wanted to lend my support to this effort. I think I was one of the few people who used the Human Relations process a dozen years ago or so on behalf of a Native American client who was discriminated against at the Rapid City Civic Center. The officers of the Human Relations took this seriously, did their own investigation, and then provided mediation services to my client. This matter was resolved to everyone's satisfaction and little cost to the City. My client went away with a feeling of actually having a place where real grievances could be redressed by the City.

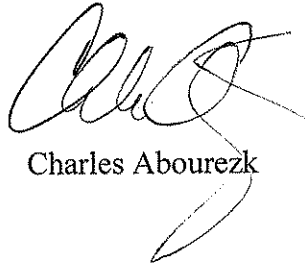
I am hopeful the City will reinstate the Human Relations Commission. Even if you do not do so for moral or legal reasons, I hope you will consider the cost efficiency of having a real mechanism for people to bring their grievances to see if they can be resolved before litigation ensues and real money is spent by both sides in such instances. We might tend to think this will

result in increased cost, but based on experience, it can actually lead to a reduction in cost and an increase in the credibility and trustworthiness of our city in the eyes of minorities. How can either the City or private enterprise lose in such an instance. Many large corporations, such as IBM and others, have realized the cost effectiveness of such initiatives, as have local governments throughout the nation.

Forward looking business people have been at the forefront of this effort across the country, and it is paying off for them, in good will and reduced litigation costs. I am hopeful the City Council will act. It is good for minority folks, good politics and good for the City of Rapid City.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of this letter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Abourezk', with a long, sweeping flourish extending downwards and to the right.

Charles Abourezk