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**The Houston Equal Rights Ordinance & Future of the LGBTQ Movement"**

**October 9, 2015**

**Panel Biographies**

**Jaimie Bockmon de Solares** is a Women, Gender and Sexuality studies major at the University of Houston. She is also a varsity debater for the UH Policy Debate team. She works toward a struggle for equality and justice by equipping her community members with the tools and knowledge to speak out against oppression in their daily lives.  She enjoys volunteering for the Houston Unites campaign and participating in community events with la Organización Latina de Trans en Texas.

**Melanie Espinosa Pang** is a nonprofit leader and licensed social worker with experience in policy advocacy, civic engagement, and coalition building. Melanie has provided a range of services through many nonprofits, from homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing to serving unaccompanied refugee minors in foster care. She currently serves as Program Director of Voices for Change, a program of One Voice Texas. Voices for Change is a coalition of former foster youth advocating to improve policy and practice within the Texas Foster Care system.

**Dee Dee Watters** a local transgender activist fighting for equal rights for ALL! Dee Dee is a leader in the community with a passion to love and encourage her brother and sister. Hosting local events and meetings not only for trans identified but for all! Dee Dee sits on the leaders board for BTWI Black Trans Women Inc, T.W.C.U.C. Transgender Women of Color United for Change, The International Day Of Peace planning team and other boards providing a much-needed voice for the transgender community.

**Mike Webb** attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, where he studied Political Science. Afterwards, Mike gained private sector experience through his employment at a Washington, D.C. law firm but he could not resist the call to help change lives in underserved communities and enlisted in a year of service for the Houston Mayor's Office of Education Initiatives as an AmeriCorps VISTA.

As Prevention Supervisor for Legacy Community Health Services’ Public Health Services Department, Mike oversees daily HIV and STD prevention and outreach activities for the center’s mPowerment program, a program focusing on empowering young gay and bisexual communities of color. As an HIV-positive queer man himself, Mike describes how lucky he feels to have amazing mentors, friends, and community members helping him overcome life’s challenges. On the political front, Mike also serves on the board of trustees and as Deputy Treasurer for the Houston GLBT Political Caucus and organizes voter awareness and registration for his fraternity, Delta Phi Upsilon. Mike is dedicated to spread the love and empowerment he has experienced to Houston’s most underserved communities.

Mike's community work has been recognized by the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund as a Rising Star Honoree along as one of the National Black Justice Coalition's 100 Black LGBTQ/SGL Emerging Leaders to Watch honoree.