



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
The Curtis Center
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THOMAS H. EARLE, ESQ.
Acting Chairperson

RUE LANDAU, ESQ.
Executive Director

March 18, 2013

Thomas McGrath, Editor
Philadelphia Magazine
1818 Market Street
36th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103

Re: "Being White in Philadelphia" Article

Dear Mr. McGrath,

The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) is the city-wide agency responsible, pursuant to the City's Home Rule Charter, for enforcement of the Fair Practices Ordinance, an ordinance intended to eradicate discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, religion, disability, gender, and sexual orientation. Consistent with the Charter, the PCHR also seeks to promote and achieve community harmony throughout the City's many diverse neighborhoods through its Community Relations Division.

The Commission writes to you today to relay its disappointment in *Philadelphia Magazine's* recent article by author, Robert Huber, "Being White in Philadelphia." While the PCHR respects and values the Magazine's First Amendment rights to free speech and expression, we also recognize the societal responsibilities of good citizenship that attach to these hallowed constitutional rights. In generic form, and with little substance, the article demonstrates insensitivity to our City's rich and racially diverse heritage. Like the Mayor and a multitude of other community and faith-based leaders, the PCHR finds the article's hyperbolic rhetoric serves little to no useful purpose, except to offend the City's African American community at large.

Having been established as the first Commission of its kind in 1951, the PCHR is profoundly dismayed that we find ourselves reading such racially hurtful material in 2013. Furthermore, and in light of the Magazine's non-diverse employment practices, we applaud the courage and conviction of Adrienne Simpson, as the Magazine's only Black employee, in speaking out so eloquently in her piece "The Only Black Person in the Room" (Philadelphia Inquirer, March 17, 2013).

To objectively address the allegations of racial disharmony raised in Mr. Huber's article, the Commission invites you, Mr. Huber and others from the Magazine to attend its next Public Meeting on Thursday, April 18, 2013 from 6-8pm in the Fairmont/Brewerytown section of the city (location to be determined). It is the PCHR's hope and intention that this Public Meeting will provide an opportunity for members of the community, and the greater public, to express their actual feelings and opinions in a more productive and civilized manner.

Respectfully,



Rue Landau, Esquire
Executive Director

Cc: Mayor Michael Nutter
PCHR Commissioners