

# ID card means 'we are all Cincinnatians'

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(Photo: The Enquirer/Mark Curnutte)

All City of Cincinnati departments, most notably emergency services, will accept a [new photo identification card](#) following council approval of a resolution Wednesday.

By a vote of 5-1, with three abstentions, the council vote – coupled with an executive order by City Manager Harry Black – means the city will now recognize an ID card to be issued by a religious coalition.

The MARCC ID, named for the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati, will be available beginning in about three

months. Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio, part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, will create the photo ID, verify applicants' documents and distribute them.

Its supporters say the card will improve public safety by providing people who otherwise do not have an ID card – people returning from prison, the homeless, immigrants, especially those living here without legal documentation.

"The bottom line is we are committed to safety," Cincinnati Police Chief Elliot K. Isaac said at a morning news conference on the steps of City Hall. The card "will enable us to assist citizens who need our services." Several speakers addressed council members at the afternoon meeting.

Chris Seelbach, P.G. Sittenfeld, David Mann, Wendell Young and Yvette Simpson, all Democrats, voted in favor of the resolution for the cards, a pet project of Mayor John Cranley. Republican Amy Murray voted no. Republican Charles Winburn, Charterite Kevin Flynn and independent Christopher Smitherman abstained.

"I have serious concerns because people will think it's a panacea for society's ills," Flynn said. "I would much rather see them get identification accepted by employers. I worry people will think once they have this ID it will solve their problems, but it's not going to. I will not stand in the way of council passing this."

Mann said approving the MARCC ID card is a way to make a statement about the dignity of each person and provides vulnerable people with a tool that can make their daily lives easier.

MARCC, a coalition of 17 denominational judicatories founded in 1968, received almost \$10,000 in start-up money from some of its members. "Love your neighbor as yourself ... love the stranger ... these biblical commandments are relevant today," said Rabbi Margaret J. Meyer, coalition president.

Sittenfeld preached civic religion. "The message today is we are all Cincinnatians," he said. "It doesn't matter the color of your skin, country of origin, whether you own a home or are homeless."