

**Comments to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors**  
**March 19, 2024**  
**by Rev. Emma Chattin**

On behalf of the TransGender Education Association and the community at large, I want to thank you, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for designating March 31 Transgender Day of visibility.

You would think with all the laws proposed and passed in many states impinging on our constitutional rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that we are the biggest threat ever. You would think that there are vast numbers of us. Well, there are not; we are a small sliver of the population... and we are often left wondering and scratching our heads trying to figure out why suddenly everyone is so frightened and threatened by us.

[ Sometimes to the point of leaving the room whenever we enter. ]

In states proposing and enacting such laws, hate crimes have quadrupled. **The human impact & consequence of anti-trans rhetoric & policy... must be acknowledged.** As such, each act of visibility, even in Northern Virginia, carries with it.. a risk of life and livelihood. Visibility for some of our members has meant being filmed with their likeness bearing ugly and false accusations & statements spread over social media, used for anti-trans fundraising, fear-mongering, and conservative political gain. As such, visibility... can even be... a heroic thing. Especially for trans women of color in our community, who face additional intersectional obstacles of prejudice regarding safety, housing, employment, and healthcare. That is why this proclamation is so important. It means that you see us. You see this community. This is a visible declaration of solidarity and the leadership necessary to build a better world. It is also a measure of how votes matter, for if different seats were sitting in your seat, we are under no illusions- this would not be happening.

We also have to remember that with visibility all too often some people **will only see the label.** I have always said that transgender is more the journey than the person. WE ARE PEOPLE. There is a person attached to the label, a person who is on an amazing journey, a journey of change, challenge, strength, pain, and vulnerability, a journey of truth in the face of great opposition, a journey which could be of benefit and inspiration to **anyone** who would take the time and the courage to listen and to see us.

In closing, the world is not created binary. Yes, we have day.... and we have night... but also from the beginning we have the beauty of their companions Dawn and Dusk, the glorious colorful beauty of the moments and spaces in between. And yes, we have the sea and we have the land. But have you ever seen a beach? That wonderful magical space that is similar to both but unlike either? Whether you look at those places or not, whether you see them or not, you cannot deny their existence. Nor can anyone deny ours.

The world is not either / or. It is a wonderful universe of possibilities.  
Wonderful miracles made visible.  
**Just like us.**