



New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ

A Just World For All

June 3, 2024

Dear Governor Sununu,

We write this letter as ordained United Church of Christ ministers and leaders within our denomination. Since 1985 our denomination, the United Church of Christ, has been open to, and affirming of, the LGBTQ+ community. On October 15, 2022, the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ recommitted to welcoming transgender, gender-non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex people and their families into the full life and ministry of our places of worship and study, and encouraged all its settings to do the same.

We made this commitment not in spite of our faith, or opposed to it, but rather because of it. In our sacred text, the Holy Bible, we hear again and again the words of God declaring that creation is good. Simply put, our transgender and non-binary siblings are part of this vast and beautiful creation, beloved in God's sight, in the fullness and sacredness of who they are as they are. They are not in need of converting to anything different to be seen as good in God's eyes.

Our teacher, leader and savior Jesus Christ welcomed all to be with him, rejecting those who would place barriers between and amongst human beings. Just like Jesus, we believe that all human beings are in need of supportive, affirming communities in order to live in health and wholeness – especially those who have known rejection and violence. Our trans children deserve to be loved and affirmed for who they are, and encouraged to see themselves as beautiful and whole, no matter their gender expression. They deserve access to health care that compassionately helps them to live into the people God has called them to be. They deserve access to the places and spaces that reflect who they are.

We come to these conclusions and beliefs because of our faith and because we have experienced firsthand God's voice and presence in our trans siblings. When transgender, gender-non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex people are welcomed into our churches, accepted and embraced for the ways they reflect the face of God, they have become beloved members and leaders of our churches, offering valuable ministries as both laity and clergy. We are richer for their presence in our midst.

As devout Christians and those tasked with teaching religious principles, the recent slew of legislation from the New Hampshire State House targeting transgender youth and their families

has made us question the terrible ways our faith has been used to marginalize and demonize those who already carry the burden of living in a world of bigotry and hatred.

We are not alone in our concern. The Republican Governor of Utah, Spencer J. Cox, in vetoing a bill that banned transgender high school students from sports teams that reflect their gender identity, wrote, “Rarely has so much fear and anger been directed at so few. I don’t understand what they are going through or why they feel the way they do. But I want them to live. And all the research shows that even a little acceptance and connection can reduce suicidality significantly.”

‘Acceptance and connection’ are the minimum of what we can and should offer our trans children in NH. This year, Trans Day of Visibility fell on March 31, which also happened to be Easter. It seems so appropriate that a day of resurrection hope, a day when we lift the miracles God is able to bring about, of life over death, of love over hatred, is also a day when all God’s children, each one of them made in the image of our Creator, are celebrated for who they are. Our prayer is that a resurrection of love and acceptance for our transgender children and their families may be felt and experienced in our State House as well.

In that spirit, we ask you to veto HB396, HB1205, HB619, and HB1312, and to help make this prayer a reality.

Sincerely,

Rev. Gordon Rankin, Conference Minister, New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ

Rev. Sara Marean, Associate Conference Minister of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ