

**ACTIVELY AFFIRMING THE HUMAN DIGNITY
OF TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY PERSONS**

A Resolution of Witness

TEXT OF THE MOTION

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has staked its claim to be an open and affirming denomination¹ and has worked hard to maintain a radical welcome to the LGBTQ+ community in many of our churches²; and

WHEREAS the human dignity and human rights of transgender and non-binary people are being threatened in at least 30 states through legislation that denies access to life-saving health care, participation in sports, and utilization of gender appropriate bathrooms³; and

WHEREAS gender dysphoria is a serious medical condition that, if left untreated, can result in severe anxiety and depression, self-harm, and suicidality⁴; and

WHEREAS when appropriately treated, gender dysphoria is easily managed by following appropriate treatment protocols to affirm their gender identity and alleviate distress⁵; and

WHEREAS compassionate parents and medical teams are, in some states, being legally punished for offering, providing, and extending life-saving healthcare to trans and nonbinary youth and adults⁶; and

WHEREAS decisions about gender-affirming medical care must be made between a provider, patient, and the patient's parents or guardians⁷; and

WHEREAS trans and nonbinary youth and adults face a higher rate of death by suicide than their peers and are more vulnerable to violence and death, specifically and disproportionately transgender women of color⁸; and

WHEREAS a Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) survey shows that more than 80% of "gender expansive" students have been harassed and a third feel unsafe in classrooms⁹; and

WHEREAS research shows that it can be extremely harmful for a transgender person to be excluded from a sports team consistent with their gender identity;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS in a country where transgender people have no federal protections while they face massive discrimination and attacks, civil rights must be spelled out and protected¹¹; and

WHEREAS public discourse perpetuating the myth of the gender binary causes great harm when used as the rationale for discrimination and punitive legislation;¹² and

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WHEREAS efforts of allies sometimes fail to provide the support intended for our transgender and non-binary siblings, including UCC Open and Affirming congregations¹³;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms the historic commitment of this church to recognize and affirm that every human being is created in the image of God and is due respect for their inherent human dignity and rights so that they may not only survive but thrive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms and proclaims and affirm people of transgender, ~~and~~ non-binary, and gender diverse experiences are beloved by God, with unique gifts and graces from the Divine for the life of the church and society, and are among the neighbors Jesus commanded his followers to love and treat with worth and dignity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the church, working with local partners, to ~~promote~~ advocate for the full legal equality at every level of law that protects the rights of transgender, nonbinary, and gender ~~non-conforming~~ diverse persons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ ~~re-affirm our commitment~~ encourages all settings of the church to ~~lift up~~ amplify the affirming voices of our ~~religious sacred~~ texts to ~~and~~ stand in solidarity with transgender, nonbinary, and gender ~~non-conforming~~ diverse persons against ~~the~~ harm done, often through the use of religious language; and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the church to organize to provide aid, comfort, and sanctuary to all who have been made refugees by hostile legislation; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on the leadership and other appropriate ministries of the United Church of Christ ~~in all of its settings~~ to create and share resources educational curricula and informational opportunities to help to learn how to affirm and inform congregations, communities, policy-makers and activists to develop gender-affirming ~~space and inclusion~~ practices in all aspects of the United Church of Christ and its communities of context.

FUNDING: The funding the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities with the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

¹ United Church of Christ. *Resolution: Calling on United Church of Christ Congregations to Declare themselves Open and Affirming*, adopted by the Fifteenth General Synod, United Church of Christ, Ames, Iowa, June 28-July 2, 1985.

² United Church of Christ. *Resolution: Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People Within the United Church of Christ and Supporting Their Civil and Human Rights*, adopted by the Twenty-Fourth General Synod, United Church of Christ, Minneapolis, MN, July 11-15, 2003.

³United Church of Christ Transgender/Nonbinary Strategy Team. *Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack: Talking Points for Faith Leaders*, p. 3. <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transgender-Talking-Points-for-Faith-Leaders.pdf>.

⁴ ACLU. *Hecox V Little – Adkins Declaration*, p. 5 <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/hecox-v-little-adkins-declaration>.

⁵ ACLU. *Hecox V Little – Adkins Declaration*, p. 6, <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/hecox-v-little-adkins-declaration>.

⁶ American College of Physicians. *Attacks on Gender-Affirming and Transgender Health Care*, November 11, 2022, <https://www.acponline.org/advocacy/state-health-policy/attacks-on-gender-affirming-and-transgender-health-care>, and:

ACLU. *Four Myths About Trans Athletes, Debunked*, <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/four-myths-about-trans-athletes-debunked>.

⁷ United Church of Christ Transgender/Nonbinary Strategy Team. *Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack: Talking Points for Faith Leaders*, p. 3. <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transgender-Talking-Points-for-Faith-Leaders.pdf>.

⁸ HRC. *Fatal Violence Against the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Community in 2021*, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/fatal-violence-against-the-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2021>, and

HRC. *Human Rights Campaign Foundation Marks Ten Years of Tracking Violence Against Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People, Recording 32 Fatalities in 2022*, <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/human-rights-campaign-foundation-marks-ten-years-of-tracking-violence-against-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-people-recording-32-fatalities-in-2022>, and;

The Trevor Project, *Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide*, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>.

⁹ Movement Advancement Project and GLSEN. *Separation and Stigma: Transgender Youth & School Facilities*, April 2017. <http://lgbtmap.org/transgender-youth-school>.

¹⁰ ACLU. *Four Myths About Trans Athletes, Debunked*, <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/four-myths-about-trans-athletes-debunked>

¹¹ United Church of Christ Transgender/Nonbinary Strategy Team. *Transgender and Nonbinary Dignity and Rights Under Attack: Talking Points for Faith Leaders*, p. 3. <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transgender-Talking-Points-for-Faith-Leaders.pdf>

¹² Intomore. *Anti-LGBTQ Activist Admits Bathroom Predator Myth Was ‘Concocted’ As Cover for Transphobic Hate*, Dawn Ennis, Intomore.com, Dec. 4, 2018

¹³ PFLAG. *Guide to Being a Trans Ally*, <https://openandaffirming.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/PFLAG-Guide-to-Being-a-Trans-Ally.pdf>, and;

HRC. *What Does the Bible Say About Transgender People*, Austen Hartke, Myles Markham, produced by the HRC Foundation, <https://www.hrc.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-transgender-people>