



Oregon Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 16, 2023

Press Contacts:

Tess Seger, Tess.Seger@oregonlegislature.gov

Hannah Kurowski, Hannah.Kurowski@oregonlegislature.gov

Oregon LGBTQ+ Caucus Supports LGBTQ2IA+ Youth in the Wake of Archdiocese Memo

SALEM, Ore. - In the wake of the Archdiocese of Portland's memo on the treatment of transgender and non-binary students, the Oregon LGBTQ+ Caucus issued a statement of love and support for transgender, non-binary, and all LGBTQ2IA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, two-spirit, intersex, asexual, and other identities) youth in Oregon.

All kids should feel safe to be their full selves in our communities. Neither church, nor state should be making decisions about gender, sexuality, or other identities for the youth in their care. This guidance is harmful to all Oregonians, but especially to the transgender youth directly targeted, the people who love them, and everyone who benefits from their lives and genius.

Oregon LGBTQ2IA+ youth are **twice as likely to experience bullying and harassment at school** and **more likely to miss school** because they are afraid for their safety.

Oregon has led on pro-student legislation that centers student safety and well-being, including:

- **Adi's Act**, which requires school districts to develop student suicide prevention plans. It also ensures plans address populations at higher risk for youth suicide, including LGBTQ2SIA+ students.

- **Every Student Belongs**, which recognizes that a student’s health and safety are the cornerstone of education and that all students are entitled to a high-quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment

Actions like this policy from the Archdiocese further marginalize students and cut them off from the care and support they need.

“I am profoundly disappointed in the Archdiocese of Portland. It breaks my heart to think of the impact this edict will have on the children of Oregon – these guidelines will further isolate and hurt kids who need nothing but support. To all the LGBTQ+ youth of Oregon: We see you and we love you,” **said Senator Kate Lieber (D-Beaverton)**.

“As a gay man and a Catholic, I am used to disappointment when it comes to the church’s leadership on this issue,” **said Representative Rob Nosse (D-Inner SE & Inner NE Portland)**. “These guidelines are very troubling, and frankly, not a reflection of the loving God and Jesus that I came to know throughout my 12 years of Catholic schooling and continued attendance at mass to this day at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church.”

“All our youth deserve to feel safe and welcome – in church, in school, in our communities,” said **Representative Travis Nelson (D-N & NE Portland)**.

“To all the students and families that will be hurt by this policy, there are resources available to support you, and the LGBTQ+ Caucus will continue to fight for you every day,” **said Representative Ben Bowman (D-Tigard, Metzger & S Beaverton)**.

“Erasing transgender identities does not make it go away, but it does tell kids that they are not safe to share their hopes, feelings, and fears with the adults who should be there to make them feel safe and whole,” **said Representative Dacia Grayber (D-SW Portland & E Beaverton)**.

Available Resources for LGBTQ2IA+ Youth:

- The Q Chat Space provides online support for LGBTQ2IA+ teens ages 13 to 19. The program is run by a nonprofit made up of local LGBTQ+ centers and organizations. Go to www.qchatspace.org/ to find support.
- If you are feeling suicidal or that you’re going to hurt yourself, you are not alone. Please call The Trevor Project, a 24/7 support line specifically for LGBTQ young people: 1-866-488-7386.

###