

## **Minute on the Rights of Transgender and Gender-Expansive People**

Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends (SCYMF) rejoices in the presence, participation, and Spirit-guided leadership of transgender (trans\*) people in our communities. In this minute, we use the term “trans\*” to refer to all people whose gender identity is not the one assigned at birth. The asterisk helps recognize the term trans\* often includes people who identify within a gender binary, as well as those who are nonbinary or otherwise gender-expansive.

We honor the gender identity and expression of each person, as determined by that person. We understand that gender expression and identity may be fluid and changeable, and we will joyfully embrace each change. We recognize that when we welcome the Light within the full spectrum of gender identities in our world, our worship experience deepens and our community is enriched.

It is particularly important for us as people of faith to testify that our spiritual experience leads us to love, to accept, to celebrate, and to support the civil and human rights of all people, including trans\* people.

We commit ourselves to support the civil and human rights of all trans\* people. No one should face discrimination in employment, housing, healthcare, identification documents, or otherwise, or have their human rights denied because of their gender identity.

The United States federal government and many state and local governments are taking numerous steps to exclude, erase, and harm trans\* people by denying them the right to fully participate in society or to receive fair, equal treatment in areas such as military service, healthcare, employment, prison assignments, bathrooms usage, and education.

Trans\* members state that these actions are already profoundly harming trans\* people around the country. We are horrified by and oppose the rising wave of legislation that demonizes trans\* people in order to deprive them of gender-affirming care and denies their basic human rights. We urge our elected officials to support legislation protecting the rights, safety, and human dignity of all people, regardless of their gender identity or gender expression. This includes trans\* youth, who, like all other youth, depend on the actions and leadership of adults to be safe, learn, and grow. As Friends, we reject any legal restrictions that target trans\* people of all ages and their families and caregivers.

We will continue to educate ourselves and our communities and act upon what we learn, working to bring about a more loving and equitable world. Specific steps include:

- Name a working group to guide us to direct legislative action and partner with other organizations doing this work.

- Work to improve our vocabulary and take correction with gratitude and without excuses or explanations (which are not reparative, and can be harmful) when we are told we used an outdated pronoun, name, or other language.
- Normalize not assuming pronouns, instead creating a space where gender affirmation is a given.
- Acknowledge that due to their gender privilege, cis people (people whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth), including those at SCYMF, must learn appropriate language and conduct before they can be effective allies to trans\* people.
- As a step in this direction, our cis members will commit to self-education about microaggressions against trans\* people: what microaggressions trans\* people commonly experience, why these cause harm, how they reinforce systemic discrimination, and what to do (and not do) if a microaggression occurs or is witnessed.
- Allies can take on the emotional labor of engaging with and educating their communities, friends, and networks.
- Recognize that acting on such education is essential for our spaces to be safe, supportive, and inclusive for trans\* adults and children, especially in the current political and social climate.
- Halt transphobic speech and actions that we witness.
- Proactively ask trans\* people about their needs and how we can best support them in coming weeks, months, and years. We recognize that directly hearing the needs of people from marginalized communities is the essence of respectful, effective support, and that each person carries different experiences and preferences.
- Contact our elected officials to support legislation protecting the rights, safety, and human dignity of all people, regardless of their gender identity or gender expression.
- Engage in and support legislation and other efforts to help dismantle systems of discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.
- Proactively show love and support to trans\* and gender-expansive people as led through our faith communities and meetings.