

April 22, 2016

Pat McCrory  
Governor of North Carolina

Dear Governor McCrory,

We are mental health providers in North Carolina. Since the passage of House Bill 2, we have become increasingly concerned about the wellbeing of transgender individuals in this state. HB2 legitimizes discrimination and has created a climate of fear and confusion. We implore you to consider the wellbeing of transgender North Carolinians of all ages and work to repeal HB2.

Our clients are residents of North Carolina, many of whom already face multiple obstacles as they carry out their daily lives. Research shows that LGBT students who experience discrimination, bullying, and harassment at school have lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression (GLSEN 2013 *National School Climate Survey*). The rate of attempted suicide by transgender individuals is an astounding 41%, as compared to 1.6% of the general population. Transgender individuals who are also people of color and/or living in poverty fare even worse than their white or middle class counterparts and are more vulnerable to the types of discrimination condoned by HB2 (*Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*). As mental health professionals who serve as first responders to these mental health crises, we see the faces behind these numbers and witness firsthand the damage done by discrimination against transgender people.

The spirit of this law is in direct conflict with the ethics of our professions. The National Association of Social Workers, the American Counseling Association, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and the American Psychological Association codes of ethics all state clearly and unequivocally that their members are not to engage in any form of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

As mental health professionals, keeping people safe is a top priority. We know that in seventeen states and over 200 cities that have policies to ensure transgender people can use bathrooms that match their gender identity, there's been no increase in public safety incidents. The only real threat is to the safety of transgender people who can't use appropriate bathrooms.

Our transgender clients are among the most vulnerable members of our community because they experience the highest levels of discrimination and misunderstanding. As the leader of the state we serve, we urge you to take action against discrimination and work to repeal HB2.

Sincerely,

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