



PRIDE CENTER OF VERMONT

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To the Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

We at the Pride Center of Vermont have been following along with the committee's discussions of H.89, an act relating to civil and criminal procedures concerning legally protected health care activity. We first want to thank the members of the committee for your consideration of these much needed protections for reproductive and gender-affirming health care providers and patients. In a time where the rights of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people are under attack across our nation, it is comforting to know that our state is doubling down on protecting our residents.

We appreciate and acknowledge the testimony provided by Lucy Leriche, Vice President of Vermont Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, where she called on the need for voices from the LGBTQ community to review this proposed legislation. We believe that H.89, as introduced, will only have a positive impact on access to gender-affirming care long term. Unlike abortion care services, gender-affirming care is a longstanding relationship between the patient and provider; sometimes occurring across state lines due to the lack of specialized care providers near the patient.

Most major U.S. medical associations, including those in the fields of pediatrics, endocrinology, psychiatry, and psychology, have issued statements recognizing the medical necessity and appropriateness of gender affirming care, including for youth, typically noting harmful effects of denying access to these services. These include statements from the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, the Endocrine Society, American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, among others. In addition to these statements, data from over a dozen studies of more than 30,000 transgender and gender-diverse young people consistently show that access to gender-affirming care is associated with better mental health outcomes and that lack of access to such care is associated with higher rates of suicidality, depression and self-harming behavior.

The Pride Center of Vermont enthusiastically supports H.89, as introduced, and implores the committee to do the same. We encourage the committee to be in contact if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Russo".

Emily Russo (they/them)
Transgender Program Manager
Pride Center of Vermont

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Bense".

Mike Bense (they/them)
Executive Director
Pride Center of Vermont

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kell Arbor".

Kell Arbor (warrior/they)
Director of Health & Wellness
Pride Center of Vermont