Pitt Queer Professionals Response to H.B. 972

June 23, 2022

To our Transgender, Gender-diverse, and Allied community members in Pittsburgh and beyond:

We, the Pitt Queer Professionals (PQP), strongly condemn the passage of the Pennsylvania H.B. 972, and the advancement of S.B. 1191 to the Senate floor. We stand in solidarity with the transgender and nonbinary communities against these actions.

These bills would ban transgender girls, women, and femmes from participating on athletic teams for “females, women, or girls.” HB 972 and S.B. 1191 would apply to students in public primary schools and high schools, public institutions of higher education, and any school or institution where students or teams compete against a public school or college.

These bills are discriminatory and are an unconscionable attack on one of Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable communities. They endanger trans women, girls, and femmes by signaling that it is acceptable to exclude trans people, creating an additional layer of stigma, while also depriving them of the benefits of participating in sports. They also harm athletes who are intersex. There is no body of scientific evidence suggesting that trans women have an advantage over cisgender women. Preventing trans girls, women, and femmes from participating in school athletics is based on inaccurate and harmful beliefs and fears about transgender people. We fear these bills only serve as a precursor to further discriminatory bills targeting transgender and gender diverse individuals and their caregivers, as it has in other states.

We urge the Pitt community and beyond to do the following:

- Write or call your representative stating why they should vote against H.B. 972 and S.B. 1191 and its negative impacts on transgender girls, women, and femmes; as well as cisgender and intersex athletes. Find your Pennsylvania Legislator at: https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/
- Host an informal or formal teach-in or space for dialogue, learning and engagement within one’s own community or workplace. Find LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups and community leaders from our curated list: Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+,
- Investigate your organizations’ policies around transgender athletes at all academic levels. Rewrite or incorporate policies that foster an inclusive environment for all, and
Show your support for the trans and nonbinary community by displaying a sign, posting on social media, and any other creative means that encourage active conversation and shows solidarity.

In addition, we urge the University of Pittsburgh, and its respected Athletics Department, to stand against H.B. 972 and S.B. 1191 and live the University's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in which the University's Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy (CS07) states it values diversity and will not engage in discrimination based on gender identity and expression. CS07 also notes that the University will, “continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission.” By publicly standing against this bill and with Pitt’s trans community, the University will demonstrate that it can provide the bare minimum steps to affirm support for current and future trans students. Standing for this issue will ensure that Pitt Queer Professionals and other diversity committees working with LGBTQIA+ populations can continue to work closely in good faith with University Administration to find ways that connect the needs of the LGBTQIA+ populations with steps that are consistent to advancement of the University’s values.

— Pitt Queer Professionals Membership

About Pittsburgh Queer Professionals

Pitt Queer Professionals is an LGBTQIA+ Affinity Group at the University of Pittsburgh focused on promoting the professional and social development of LGBTQIA+ staff and faculty and advocating for the needs of the larger Pittsburgh community. In addition to releasing this statement, we have compiled a list of resources to support the trans and nonbinary communities and to educate the general public about this issue. Visit our curated list here: LGBTQIA+ Resource Guide