



Attention: Regional Executive

February 14, 2024

Re: Collective and urgent response to the legislated hatred of trans youth

To our partners in faith, justice, and advocacy,

In our shared work of advocacy and support to individuals and communities of faith in Alberta and across Canada, Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble and Affirming Connections are writing to you as representatives of your Regional Council. The rights of trans youth are being attacked, and local congregations need your support. While we are doing what we can to connect and collaborate, local and regional responses are critical at this time. It is our hope that each of you will carry this message to your Regional Council and then take action together.

The proposed 'parental rights' legislation in Alberta, as well as other passed and proposed bills across the country, present a serious and urgent threat to the safety and wellbeing of trans youth in Canada. Such legislation will see trans youth stripped of their dignity and autonomy, and will put them at increased risk of serious social oppression and self-harm. Experts such as the [Canadian Paediatric Society](#) agree that this kind of legislation is incredibly dangerous. For more context on the damaging implications, [click here](#).

Those that support such legislation are organized and well-funded, and have been working for years to see these bills introduced. As people of faith, we have a collective responsibility to challenge this hatred, not just reactively, but proactively. We need to build a comprehensive, national strategy that considers both short and long term actions and goals.

We want you to join us, and be Public, Intentional and Explicit in the public square. We have developed the following Calls to Action, and request that each Region answer these calls:

- **PUBLICLY** show up in your communities and encourage your communities of faith to do the same, by:
 - Encouraging communities of faith to be involved in [PIE Day](#)
 - Attending local activism events (eg. rallies, protests) as representatives of your Regional Council and local community of faith
 - Supporting organizations such as [Egale](#), who are raising funds for legal efforts to challenge the hateful legislation
- **INTENTIONALLY** support your communities of faith by:
 - Providing region-specific options to support advocacy and activism work, such as letter writing campaigns or public rallies. Some examples can be found [here](#).
 - Providing pastoral care during this challenging time, such as holding space for queer folks to gather and connect. Encourage your staff and clergy to join AU/SE's proposed [Care Circle](#) program, to provide pastoral support to those in need. You can also host virtual vigils and meditations for folks in your region
 - Creating or deepening your strategy for specific support and care of queer (and allied) clergy in your region
 - Providing faith communities with accurate information. Resources can be found [here](#).



- *EXPLICITLY* designate an Affirming Ministries contact for your region by:
 - Designating one or more person to be responsible for this work, and ensuring they have the resources and support to be effective in supporting the Affirming movement locally and regionally
 - Supporting your staff to attend training that supports them in this work, such as [this one](#) with Rose-Ingrid Benjamin being hosted by Affirming Connections on February 22
 - Providing Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble and Affirming Connections with the contact(s) name, title, and email, of your Regional Affirming representative(s) and ensure to update if there is turnover in the role
 - Sending your Regional Affirming representative(s) to the national strategy meeting on **February 27 at 9amPT/12pmET**, to meet with other regional representatives

We know that each of you are working hard for justice in your regions, and that there is always more work than time. We recognize your efforts, and hope that by providing a framework and opportunity for collaboration, a faithful and concentrated response to this hatred from your Region will be possible.

In solidarity,

Alix Dolson, Executive Director of Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble
Pam Rocker, Director of Affirming Connections