

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minute of Support for the LGBTQIA+ Community

As Quakers, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting believes that there is that of God, the Light, Spirit, within every person. We receive the gifts of service and care from many of our members who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) and value all as beloved members of our community.

Currently the federal government is targeting LGBTQIA+ people, by writing legislation that denies gender affirming care and treatment, questioning trans and gender diverse individuals' right to exist and be their true selves, pulling funding for mental health hotlines that serve LGBTQIA+ individuals, and threatening to rescind their rights to love and marry who they love. These actions have created dangerous levels of stress in LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly in the trans community.

The behavior of the current administration goes against all the testimonies Quakers hold dear - especially equality, peace, justice, and integrity. We find this to be intolerable. Several Monthly and Quarterly Meetings across the Yearly Meeting have sent us Minutes of Concern on this topic.

We unite in honoring all people's right to love as they feel led and to inhabit the body that best expresses their true selves. We cherish the diversity that is brought to our community by the participation of these individuals.

We stand among and as allies with LGBTQIA+ people and cherish them. Our allyship demands that we continue to educate ourselves on the issues LGBTQIA+ people face, provide a safe space for LGBTQIA+ people and families to worship, and work to end discrimination based on sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Some actions meetings or individuals could take:

- Use the resources on the PYM website to learn about the life experiences of some LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Inform FCNL that LGBTQIA+ rights is one of our legislative priorities
- Advocate for the full protection of civil rights for all
- Encourage individual meetings or Quarters to host LGBTQIA+ speakers to open a dialogue and get to know them
- Open a dialogue with other churches on LGBTQIA+ issues

There will be opportunities for reporting back to PYM and having further discussion.

By embracing members of the LGBTQIA+ community, we are blessed by their strength and endurance which bring rich colors to the tapestry of our Quaker fellowship.

[For public distribution]

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Distribution suggestions

Regular version- Quaker distribution

All MMs and QMs in PYM

All other yearly Meetings

FGC

FCNL (requested)

AFSC

Friends Journal, Quaker Speak

FWCC

FUM and associated MMs

Modified version-Public Distribution

Press and elected officials

Elected officials and representatives for PA, NJ, DE & MD

Philadelphia Mayor Parker and all City Council people

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Wilmington Journal

Philadelphia Gay News

Camden (South Jersey?) Courier Post

Nj.com

Morning Call, Allentown

Ask Monthly & Quarterly meetings to send to their local papers

Non-profits

World Council of Churches, PA Council of Churches

Southeastern PA Trans-Parent Support Group

Philly Family Pride

Trans Equity Coalition

PFLAG, national and local chapters

The Mazzoni Center, and other relevant [local organizations](#) in the region who are engaged in the work of supporting the LGBTQIA+ community.

William Way Center

Additional ideas:

engaging with House Representative Sarah McBride's office (DE) asking if she would consider meeting with PYM to address our community or something along those lines.

Contact by any Wilmington Friends who are her constituents?

Perhaps Debbie Murray-Shephard????!!! Accompanied by a trans person?

Hiring graphic designer to come up with a banner that could succinctly and publicly state our support for the LGBTQIA+ community that meetings (if they so choose) could put outside of their meetinghouses. (Millville MM) Tim Crawford of Moorestown MM

Encourage meetings to consider listing themselves on vetted websites as LGBTQIA+ welcoming spaces for worship. Gaychurch.org and Churchclarity.org

Ask MMs to confirm their welcoming of LGBTQIA people on the front page of their websites

(IN A PERFECT WORLD) Nikki and a clerk from each QM/MM co-write an op ed piece for the local papers