

Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting

Minute of Solidarity with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) Community

Adapted from a similar minute from Germantown Monthly Meeting
Approved by PQM July 28, 2024

Those who would extinguish freedom have historically targeted the most vulnerable and disregarded in society — those with the fewest allies, the fewest willing to put themselves in harm's way to defend them, the fewest who see their fate as inextricably bound up with them. To the degree they are successful in isolating the most marginalized, they are emboldened to widen their assault until, in the famous and sobering words of Martin Niemöller, "There is no one left to speak out."

Today, those facing the spearhead of this attack are the LGBTQIA community — and in particular, trans people. Already fighting a rearguard action against the extension of marriage equality, the abolition of anti-sodomy laws, and the growing social acceptance of lesbian and gay people, the religious Right, and those who would use them as catspaws, are now focusing their assault on this minority-within-a-minority that does not conform to conventional norms of gender expression and gender identity and who can most easily be "othered."

The viciousness and danger of this assault is reflected in the overtly genocidal threats that are now issued publicly without shame or qualification. "Transgenderism," a recent speaker at CPAC [Conservative Political Action Committee] proclaimed, "must be eradicated from our public life," chillingly echoing the language of the Nuremberg Laws. And in grim confirmation of the seriousness of this intent, the flood of recent state laws prohibiting gender-affirming care, not only for children and adolescents but also for adults, will, to a certainty, multiply the cost in trans lives beyond the already intolerable levels of violence, murder, and suicide that plague this beleaguered community, effectively eradicating trans individuals.

Even the advances in civil rights for the broader queer community that we have come to take for granted are under attack, as opponents seek to carve out "religious freedom" exceptions to anti-discrimination laws and call on an already predisposed Supreme Court majority to re-legitimize anti-sodomy laws and reverse marriage equality.

Finally, not content with crusading domestically, the forces of repression have actively supported anti-LGBTQIA laws and campaigns beyond our shores — most alarmingly in Uganda, where the recent "Kill the Gays" law, imposing the death penalty for so-called "aggravated homosexuality," actually enjoyed the support of some East African Friends and some American Quaker supporters.

In such a climate, mere assurances of tolerance, acceptance, goodwill, and even support are no longer enough from those who stand for justice and equality. We of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting commit ourselves, as individuals and collectively, to active resistance and to solidarity with LGBTQIA people everywhere, in ways including:

- Declaring to the world that all individuals are by right entitled to the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression that are authentically theirs, and actively campaigning for laws and policies that reflect this testimony.
- Promising to provide a safe space for all LGBTQIA members, attenders, and other individuals who reach out to us.
- Pledging to continually educate ourselves on issues of concern to the queer community and charging our committees to consider how LGBTQIA issues impact their work and how they can contribute to advancing justice and equality.
- Pledging to be allies in word and deed.