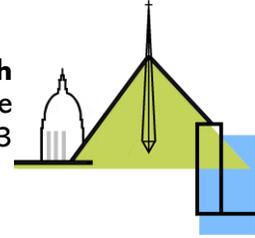


**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
322 E. Washington Ave  
Madison, WI 53703



**Re: In support of our LGBTQ+ Youth**

To: Open Letter to our State Legislators

Date: May 19, 2021

Dear Representative Stubbs, Rep. Murphy, Rep. Dallman, Rep. Tranel, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Wittke, Rep. Summerfield, Rep. Krug, Rep. Petryk, Rep. Cabral-Guevara, Rep. Moses, Rep. Hesselbein, Rep. Shankland, Rep. Anderson, Rep. Emerson,  
Cc: Representative Hong, Senator Roys, Governor Evers

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)*

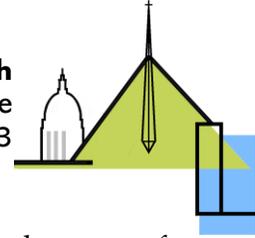
As faithful Christians, we at St. John's Lutheran Church believe the "Protect Women in Sports Act" is misnamed and is harmful to young people. Our mission is to follow the teachings of Jesus and be a welcoming servant in the heart of the city. Therefore, it is our prerogative to stand against injustice wherever we see it. Our congregation has been active in providing shelter to homeless men, giving resources to local people in need, and providing space for a variety of non-profit organizations to meet. We have been a strong Reconciling in Christ congregation since 2006. This means that an essential part of our mission is to be an outspoken advocate for the LGBTQ+ community.

The AB195 and AB196 are a direct attack on transgender youth, as they prevent them from enjoying the many health benefits, character and community building that team sports are known to provide. We directly condemn this act and all others that seek to marginalize parts of God's beloved creation. This act is not only directly harmful to transgender girls, but also to the people who surround them. Seeing one group of people being singled out and prohibited from participating in an activity perpetuates negative stereotypes and preconceived notions that the public has about that group of people. In this case, transgender women and girls already face horrific discrimination and violence (already more than 20 transgender people have been murdered in the US in 2021), the last thing transgender people need is this added stigma of not being able to play sports with their peers.

The Bible tells us to love our neighbors and protect all of God's children no matter who they are. This includes all of the members of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, Jesus was known for being associated with and advocating for marginalized communities such as tax collectors and prostitutes. We need to take a stand and follow in Jesus' footsteps regarding the

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marginalized communities of today. The “Women in Sports Act” is a direct attack on one of those marginalized communities and we strongly oppose it.

As your constituents we urge you to support queer and trans youth in your midst and vote no on S.251 and HR 426 [Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2021](#) and think about the harm you will be inflicting if this is passed. People will suffer greatly, which is the antithesis of what we believe in as a congregation and as Christians. In 2019, there were at least 22 murderers of transgender people in the USA, most of whom were women.<sup>1</sup> These are only the reported deaths, as many instances of violence against the LGBTQ+ community go undocumented. In addition, due to the discrimination they face, LGBTQ+ youth are 3 times more likely to attempt suicide in their lifetimes compared to cisgender heterosexual youth. This is our chance to make a decision to protect the LGBTQ+ community, which has historically been targeted not only with violence but also with hate, stigma and fear. We are in a position to make a difference and protect transgender youth, instead of letting the discrimination progress.

We urge you to vote no on S.251 and HR 426 and protect transgender and nonbinary youth.

Sincerely,

The Council of St. John's Lutheran Church

Caden Collins  
Victor Forberger  
Dick Gundlach  
Tammy Knickmeier  
Miriam Mueller-Owens  
Doug Peterson  
Barbie Pietz  
Dick Severson  
Shari Stephenson  
Marcia Williamson  
The Rev. Peter Beeson, Pastor

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<sup>1</sup> (<https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-releases-annual-report-on-epidemic-of-anti-transgender-violence-2019>)