

Dear More Light Presbyterians Community,

At his inauguration ceremony on Monday, January 20, the president of the United States announced, "As of today, it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders: male and female." An executive order formalizing his proclamation followed. The board and staff of More Light Presbyterians denounce the harmful ideology and discrimination this hate speech promotes; we call on all people of faith and values to join us in fighting this and all proceeding attacks on trans, intersex, and other LGBTQIA+ rights in the coming weeks, months, and years.

In eliminating the language of gender and acknowledging only the language of "biological sex," Trump's executive order conflates gender with sex and denies the sociological and biological complexities of both. What is more, the order employs rhetoric claiming to "defend" cisgender women from "gender ideology". MLP board and staff denounce the pitting of transgender people against cis women as a "divide and conquer" tactic, meant to disrupt the solidarity these communities could wield against the administration targeting the bodily autonomy of both.

While executive actions do not have the authority to override the Constitution, federal statutes, or established legal precedent on their own, they do lay out standards that the president expects the government to implement. This order thus has tangible consequences for the millions of trans and intersex people living in the United States—including multiple members of the MLP board and staff—by threatening the legal protections and rights we have fought long and hard for in schools, workplaces, prisons, hospitals, and the church.

Because of this imminent threat to our queer siblings, and because the Christian faith is too often weaponized as a pretext for harmful laws, it is more important than ever that we take a firm stance against discrimination. At this very moment, the Presbyterian Church (USA) is deliberating whether to add the categories of "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" to our denomination's discrimination clause. We maintain our support for the passage of Amendments 24A and 24C in our denomination's Book of Order.

The staff and board of More Light Presbyterians believe in the inherent beauty, worth, and dignity of all people. We believe both social and medical gender affirmation is salvific - it saves lives - and that the laws of human government obstruct the laws of our loving God in denying trans and intersex people this affirmation. We urge our member congregations, friends, and all Christians to speak up against these measures; our siblings need us more than ever.

Here are some ways to get active:

- Call your representatives urging them to denounce the Executive Order erasing trans people.
- Start discussions in your congregation about supporting Polity Amendments 24A and 24C.
- Reach out to local LGBTQIA+ organizations and ask how you can get involved / resource them.
- Buy from queer-owned businesses in your area.
- Download REFUGE Restrooms and begin marking any gender neutral or trans-safe public restrooms you encounter.
- Donate to a mutual aid fund that supports trans people, or to a trans individual's fundraiser for gender affirming care or basic necessities.
- If you are an ally/co-conspirator, keep educating yourself on transgender and intersex issues so that you can respond confidently to hate and misinformation you witness; if you are a harmed or an impacted community member, hold fast to community with us.

Finally, we extend a particular message to all those who will be most directly impacted by this new presidential term:

**Hateful people want nothing more than to see you feeling hopeless and abandoned—but we promise you, there will always be people in your corner ready to protect you with our lives. We will not leave you to fight alone, no matter how dire things get. Cling to your community, nurture your spirit however you can, and remember: Politicians were never going to save us. We keep us safe, trusting in the love and solidarity of the One who created each of us with purpose and delight (Genesis 1:31; Psalm 139:14).**

In Solidarity,

MLP Board and Staff