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An Open Letter to Governor Gavin Newsom

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We write on behalf of the Sacramento LGBT Community Center and the thousands of LGBTQ+ individuals we serve annually with profound disappointment. Under your leadership, California has been in the vanguard of equity and inclusion. However, your recent comments indicating that the inclusion of transgender athletes in sports is “deeply unfair” have raised serious concerns. At a time when transgender people, especially youth, are already increasingly under attack, words matter.

Discussions on fairness and belonging in athletics must center on the voices and experiences of transgender people. Excluding transgender women harms all women by inviting gender policing and subjecting them to invasive tests and baseless accusations. Sports should foster inclusion, not division. The idea that transgender women have an inherent advantage ignores the discrimination, harassment, and violence they face. According to [the U.S. Trans Survey, 22% of trans women perceived as trans were harassed to the point of leaving school, while another 10% were expelled.](#) These struggles—not athletic dominance—define their reality. California must uphold its leadership in equity and inclusion for all.

At the Sacramento LGBT Community Center, we help transgender and nonbinary individuals who have experienced the harm of exclusion every day with life-saving youth and family programs, housing, mental health services, resource navigation, and advocacy. Our Training Institute works to create safer more LGBTQ+ affirming and supportive schools, workplaces, healthcare institutions, and social services through employer-based training, policy consultation services, and technical assistance. But we need strong allies in our elected officials—leadership that unwaveringly reinforce these values.

Governor Newsom, we invite you to visit our Center to meet with transgender community members, hear their stories, and witness firsthand the challenges they face. Now is the time for you to reaffirm California’s commitment to being a place where all people, regardless of gender identity, belong and can thrive.

We urge you to use your platform to combat misinformation and reject harmful narratives. Now is not the time to abandon or scapegoat transgender and nonbinary people. California must continue to be a state where every individual is valued and protected—not just in words, but in action.

We look forward to your response and the opportunity to collaborate to keep California at the forefront of LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "DAVID".

David Heitstuman, CEO
Sacramento LGBT Community Center