

June 10, 2016

Dear Governor Hutchinson:

We write to you as Arkansas faith leaders who are deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of all Arkansans, and particularly of vulnerable Arkansas children and youth. We are grateful for the role you played during the recent special session to scuttle an amendment which would have made sex offenders of transgender Arkansans who merely wish to use the restroom that conforms to their gender identity. At the same time, we are dismayed by your statement urging Arkansas public schools to disregard Attorney General Loretta Lynch's directive that transgender youth be permitted to use bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender identity.

Discrimination against individuals based upon their gender identity or sexual orientation is wrong, no matter how it is characterized in religious or social terms. Refusal to allow transgender Americans to use restrooms conforming to their gender identity is discrimination based on a person's sex and is therefore both morally repugnant and forbidden by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

We reject the characterization of the controversy as being about "boys" or "men" in girls' or women's restrooms. Transgender women and girls are not boys or men; they are women and girls. We further reject the proposition that people pose as transgender persons for the purpose of voyeurism or abuse in women's restrooms. No case provides evidence to document these slanderous claims. To the contrary, ample evidence demonstrates that transgender women and girls face violence in men's restrooms.

We would be eager to be part of discussions intended to frame a solution that respects the rights of all Arkansans, including those who are transgender and those who are troubled by sharing a restroom with transgender persons.

As religious leaders, most of whom are not transgender, we affirm that we are comfortable sharing public restrooms with everyone who shares the same gender identity. We affirm that every person, including those whose gender identity doesn't conform to their chromosomes, is created exactly as God intended, in the divine image.

Faithfully,

Rev. Karen Akin  
Second Presbyterian Church  
Little Rock

The Rev. Dr. Kate Alexander  
Christ Episcopal Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Maxine Allen

United Methodist clergy\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Paul Atkins  
United Methodist clergy\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Dr. Fred Ball, OFR  
San Damiano Ecumenical Catholic Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Dr. Candace Barron  
Amboy United Methodist Church\*  
Gardner United Methodist Church\*  
North Little Rock

Rev. Dr. Leslie Belden  
First United Presbyterian Church\*  
Fayetteville

Rev. Velda S. Bell  
United Methodist Church\*  
Bentonville

The Rt. Rev. Larry Benfield  
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Michael Blanchard  
Oak Forest United Methodist Church\*  
Little Rock

Rabbi Barry Block  
Congregation B'nai Israel\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Dr. William W. Branch, Jr.  
Presbytery of Arkansas\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Jeanie Burton  
Retired United Methodist pastor\*

The Rev. Larry Burton  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church\*  
Newport

The Rev. Canon Dr. Dennis G. Campbell  
St. James Episcopal Church\*  
Eureka Springs

The Rev. Amber Carswell  
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Mary Craig Caruthers  
Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas\*  
Retired

The Rev. Brooks Cato  
Christ Episcopal Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Jay Clark  
Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church\*  
Little Rock

Pastor Preston Clegg  
Second Baptist Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Mary Jane Cole  
United Methodist clergy\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Nancy Cook  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church\*  
Hot Springs

Rev. Stephen Copley  
United Methodist clergy\*  
North Little Rock

The Rev. Kelly Craft, MDiv  
Interim Pastor  
Highland Drive Christian Church (Disciples)\*

Jonesboro

The Rev. Teri Wooten Daily  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church\*  
Conway

Rev. Dr. Denise Donnell  
Senior Faith Organizer  
Human Rights Campaign\*  
Little Rock

Rev. David H. Dyer  
Westminster Presbyterian Church\*  
Little Rock

Pastor Randy Eddy-McCain  
Open Door Community Church\*  
Sherwood

Angelia Frazier-Henson, LMSW, Minister  
Non-denominational Christian\*  
Benton

Rev. David C. Freeman  
First United Methodist Church\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Gwen Fry  
Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas priest\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Lisa Smith Fry  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Howard Gordon  
Minister Emeritus  
First Presbyterian Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Wendell Griffen  
New Millennium Baptist Church\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Lowell E. Grisham  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church\*  
Fayetteville

Chad Jones, Minister  
Arkansas Christians for Equality\*  
Conway

The Rev. Neil Kaminski  
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church\*  
Hot Springs Village

Rev. Clare Kelley  
Presbyterian Church (USA)\*  
Holiday Island/Eureka Springs

Rev. Adam Kirby  
United Methodist clergy\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Blake Lasater  
Eureka Springs United Methodist Church\*  
Eureka Springs

Rev. Frank LeBlanc  
Westover Hills Presbyterian Church\*  
Little Rock

Rabbi Eugene H. Levy  
Retired Rabbi  
Little Rock

Rev. Dr. Robert Wm Lowry  
Presbyterian Church (USA)\*  
Little Rock

Dale Manning, minister  
Universal Life Church\*  
Fayetteville

The Rev. Patricia Matthews  
Christ Episcopal Church\*

Little Rock

The Rev. Mary Janet "Bean" Murray  
St. Michael's Episcopal Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Jan K. Nielsen, J.D., M.Div.  
Unitarian Universalist Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Victor Nixon  
Retired United Methodist Church clergy\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Marie Mainard O'Connell  
First Presbyterian Church of Argenta\*  
North Little Rock

Rev. Annette Olsen  
Unity of Fayetteville City\*  
Fayetteville

Rev. James Parrish, M.Div.  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship\*  
Fayetteville

The Rev. Susan Payne  
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Katie Goss Pearce  
United Methodist Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Kelly Pearson  
First Presbyterian Church\*  
Dardanelle

The Rev. Jesse Perkins  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church\*  
Jonesboro

Rev. Dennis Ritchie

Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista\*  
Bella Vista

Rev. Dr. Ryan A. Rush  
The United Methodist Church\*  
Pine Bluff

Rev. Anne Russ  
First Presbyterian Church of Argenta\*  
North Little Rock

Rev. Robb Ryerse  
Vintage Fellowship\*  
Fayetteville

The Rev. Danny Schieffler  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Dr. Clint Schnekloth  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church\*  
Fayetteville

Rev. Britt Skarda  
Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church\*  
Little Rock

Rev. Betsy Singleton Snyder  
United Methodist clergy\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Dr. Harris G. Sonnenberg  
Retired  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America\*  
Fayetteville

Rev. Rebecca Spooner  
Wellspring Renewal Center\*  
PC(USA) clergy\*  
Conway

Rev. Terry Tallent, MDiv

Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Little Rock

Barbara G. Taylor, Ph.D.  
Senior Dharma Teacher  
Morning Start Zen Center\*  
Fayetteville

Rev. Melanie Tubbs  
United Methodist Church\*  
Ola

Rev. Michael Vinson  
Minister at Large  
Presbytery of Arkansas\*  
Conway

Rev. Lindy Vogado  
Second Presbyterian Church\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Scott Walters  
Christ Episcopal Church\*  
Little Rock

The Rev. Canon Rick Ward-Harder, Ph.D., D.Min.  
Diocese of the Delta, The Progressive Episcopal Church\*  
St. Michael's the Archangel Parish\*  
Hot Springs  
St. Mychal Judge\*  
Texarkana

Rev. J.J. Whitney  
United Methodist clergy\*  
Conway

Rev. Dian Williams  
Unity Minister, Retired\*  
Compassionate Fayetteville Facilitator\*  
Fayetteville

Rev. Susan Carter Wiggins, MDiv, LAMFT  
Presbyterian Church (USA)\*



\*Organizations listed for purposes of identification only.