

**Statement in Support of LGBTQ Youth  
Democratic Party of Benton County  
March 2021**

First, to the transgender and gender nonconforming youth and community of Arkansas, you are seen, you are valued, and you are loved for who you are.

Today, from the floor of the Arkansas House of Representatives and Senate, countless LGBTQ youth heard adults make false statements that questioned their very existence and psychological safety. The debate over HB1570 was based very much on the same bad and incorrect information that gave birth to this terrible bill in the first place. Instead of focusing on the facts, elected officials chose to use words such as “abominations” to describe children. The DPBC harshly condemns the hateful and derogatory comments we heard from our “leaders” today.

HR1570, which prohibits healthcare professionals from giving or referring a minor to another provider for gender affirming care and prohibits insurance from paying for it, goes against national health organizations such as the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Additionally, SB354 and the idea that transgender girls should not participate in girls’ sports is based in ignorance and fear. In fact, these bills invite gender policing, perpetuates the “bathroom predator” myth, and leaves countless Arkansas youths out in the cold with zero protections. By voting in favor of these harmful pieces of legislation, Arkansas Republicans are using their power to harm marginalized groups in our state instead of using it to help all Arkansans feel safe in their communities.

To anyone that heard things said about them today, please know you are not alone and there are folks here in Arkansas fighting for your rights every day. For allies of the LGBTQ community, please continue to contact your state legislators and let them know that these comments and the hate we witnessed today does not belong in our state.

In Solidarity,

Anna Good - DPBC Chair

Cody Little - DPBC Vice Chair

Tyler Masters - DPBC Secretary

Lon Cross - DPBC Treasurer