12/12/22

Dear President Bryan, Vice President Smith, Secretary Yeager, and the Carroll Board of Trustees,

 We represent **Texas Jews for Justice**, a group of 33 Jewish clergy, organizational leaders and individuals who are engaged in the work of *Tikkun Olam* – repair of the world, and **The Inclusive Faith Coalition**, an interfaith clergy group that values and practices full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people.

We are writing to you to express our deep concern over the proposed changes to the Carroll ISD Student Code of Conduct that you are discussing at tonight’s meeting, which removes sexual orientation, gender and Title IX protection from your nondiscrimination statement: The new proposed statement reads:

*“Carroll ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups….”*

Our faith tradition teaches us that the preservation of human life is the most important commandment (*mitzvah),* and we believe that every human is made *B’Tzelem Eloheem,* in the image of God. Our sages instruct us that if we save one life, it’s as if we’ve saved the world, and if we destroy one life, it’s as if we’ve destroyed the world.

Our schools are tasked with the responsibility of keeping children safe. Parents send their children to school each day assuming that they will be protected from harm. Erasing the LGBTQ student community from discrimination protection is dangerous and irresponsible, and will unleash untold emotional and physical damage on children, threatening their very existence during a crucial time in their lives when they are discovering their place in the world and developing self-esteem.  The Trevor Project states that LGBTQIA+ people are four times more likely to attempt suicide, a number that can be significantly lowered when they are accepted in all areas of their lives.

The refusal to afford LGBTQ students the right to feel safe and protected in school is nothing short of persecution based on identity. As clergy leaders and allies, we ask you to retain the statement of nondiscrimination that is **currently printed** in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, which states:

*“In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Carroll ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color,* ***religion,*** *sex,* ***gender, sexual orientation,*** *national origin, disability or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,* ***as amended: Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972;*** *and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.”*

With appreciation for your consideration,

**Texas Jews for Justice**

Cantor Sheri Allen, Makom Shelanu Congregation, Ft. Worth

Professor Richard Allen, Texas Christian University, Ft. Worth

Barbara Baruch, Advocacy Co-Chair, National Council of Jewish Women, San Antonio

Susan Barzelay, Colleyville

Bobbie Cohen, State Policy Advocate, National Council of Jewish Women,  Houston

Cantor Don Croll, Congregation Beth El Binah, Dallas

 Stacy Cushing, Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Texoma

Caren Edelstein, State Policy Advocate, National Council of Jewish Women, Dallas

 Fredi Bleeker Franks, Chair, RAC-TX (Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism)

puck glass, Makom Shelanu Congregation, Ft Worth

Cantor Vicky Glikin, Temple Emanu-El, Dallas

Sydney Greenblatt, Congregation Emanu El, Houston

Rabbi Kimberly Herzog Cohen, Temple Emanu-El, Dallas

Rabbi Nancy Kasten, Faith Commons, Dallas

Beth Lasher, Temple Shalom, Dallas

Ann Mecklenburger, Ft. Worth

Ralph Mecklenburger, Rabbi Emeritus, Beth-El Congregation, Ft. Worth

Rabbi Mara Nathan, Temple Beth-El, San Antonio

Elyse Rosenberg, State Policy Advocate, National Council of Jewish Women, Austin

Cameron Samuels, Vice-President, Reform Jewish Youth Movement

Beth Schneider, Houston

Sandra Silverman, Grapevine

Marilyn Sonnenberg, Houston

Carol St. Onge, Ft. Worth

 Lori Stockstiel, President, National Council of Jewish Women, San Antonio

Lisa Stone, Co-Chair, Social Justice Committee, Congregation Beth Israel, Houston

Cantor Renee Waghalter, Congregation Beth El, Houston

Leah White, Associate Regional Director, ADL Texoma

Judith Williams, Bedford

Stuart Yarus, Bedford

Rabbi Marina Yergin, Temple Beth-El, San Antonio

Rabbi Elana Zelony, Congregation Beth Torah, Richardson

Rabbi Brian Zimmerman, Beth-El Congregation, Ft. Worth

**The Inclusive Faith Coalition**

Rev. Dr. Katie Hays (convener), Galileo Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Father Kevin Johnson, All Souls Episcopal Church
Rev. Ken Ehrke, Embrace United Church of Christ
Rev. Kristin Klade, Kyrie Pub Church

Cantor Sheri Allen, Makom Shelanu Congregation
Father John Luft, Saint Anne Mother of Mary Independent Catholic Church

Rev. Allison Liles, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church
Rev. Curtis Smith, Trinity Metropolitan Community Church
Rev. Jeremy Skaggs, Welcome Table Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Kate McGee, Westminster Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
Rev. Jeremy Pope, community chaplain