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Dear Friend,

I am writing to you after a year in which the assaults on our community have continued to intensify. Across the country, lawmakers have relentlessly challenged our most fundamental & basic human rights. In 2022, over 200 bills were introduced during the legislative session, which targeted the rights & safety of people in the U.S. As I write to you, 2023’s legislative session is ending, and we are tracking over 450 proposed bills specifically targeting the transgender community, a majority of which specifically target transgender youth. In 2002, we memorialized 47 transgender lives that were cut short by violence, and two more lives that were taken from us on the eve of Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) in the tragic shooting at Club Q.

Despite all of this, the trans community is not only persisting in our fight against these attacks, but we are thriving as we do. I know that we will overcome these challenges. This confidence is due, in no small part, to the dedication, compassion, and conviction I see every day within NCTE. Our staff exemplifies the talent, expertise, imagination, and strength of the community we serve, and in the past year alone they have accomplished so much.

2022 was a landmark year as we again launched the U.S. Trans Survey, the largest survey of trans people, by trans people, in the country. The 2015 survey was the largest survey ever devoted to the experiences of transgender people, with 27,715 respondents across the United States. The 2022 survey has far exceeded those results and the data provided by the survey will be crucial to advocates, journalists, and policymakers in cutting through the fog of disinformation and presenting the facts about the lives, experiences, & struggles of our community. Throughout 2022 NCTE and our partners worked with the Biden Administration on new guidance on child welfare, nonbinary markers on passports, protecting healthcare for transgender youth, OSHA restroom guidance, and many other issues. We provided feedback and support for the Respect for Marriage Act, the Affordable Care Act Section 1557 proposed rule, Title IX rulemaking concerning trans athletes, and we played a pivotal role in the historic revisions to TSA’s rules for trans travelers. While opposing the attacks on our rights, speaking on the floor of Congress, and working in coalition with grassroots activists & advocacy groups on the ground in nearly every state, we’ve continued fighting to reinforce protections at every level.

Internally, we’ve deepened our commitment to be the change we want to see in the world. We’ve continued to build a more equitable working environment with the unionization of our staff, the strengthening of diversity policies, and the development of support systems and accountability structures. We’ve continued recruiting immensely talented staff across each department and as we grow, we continue to reflect on our shared vision for the future of NCTE’s work.

I’m proud to present the 2022 Annual Report, detailing our achievements and the hard work of our dedicated staff and partners. Our work is made possible by advocates like you, and we are truly grateful for your incredible support. Thank you for your commitment to NCTE and our community.

Sincerely,

Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen (he/him)
Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality & the NCTE Action Fund
2022 was a landmark year for us as NCTE launched the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey. Building on the previous survey in 2015, the new survey is more comprehensive and ambitious in scope, covering health, employment, income, the criminal justice system and many other aspects of trans lives. It will provide invaluable data for lawmakers, researchers, journalists, the public, and for the transgender community.

Once the data has been collated and analyzed, NCTE will be issuing a series of reports, including breakdown reports by state and by race/ethnicity, and will provide the most complete picture of the transgender community yet. To ensure that the survey reflects the diversity of our community, NCTE partnered with the Black Trans Advocacy Coalition, the TransLatin@ Coalition, the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance, and other organizations that serve trans people nationwide. The survey was open to all trans people aged 16 and up who reside in the United States or U.S. territories.

As a community-led survey by trans people for trans people, this critical data informs and educates the public on the lived experience of transgender people across the United States.

Josie Caballero, NCTE’s U.S. Trans Survey and Special Projects Director

Trans advocates including Alok Vaid-Menon, Big Freedia, Rain Dove, Rose Montoya, Rey Resendez, Schuyler Bailar, Shea Diamond, TS Madison, and others joined us in promoting the survey, hosting livestreams, making videos and posting on their social media accounts to spread the word. The response was incredible, far exceeding the number of respondents to the 2015 survey.

NCTE is proud to have undertaken this vital work, and we look forward to presenting the findings in the year ahead.
The Biden-Harris administration has kept its promise to reform the US passport system to ensure transgender people have accurate travel documents.

For the first time, the US State Department has issued a U.S. passport with an X gender marker for non-binary persons. This follows last year’s rulemaking when the State Department removed medical requirements for a person to change the gender marker on their passport and other consular forms.

NCTE has been working for these policy changes for many years, and we are elated to see our work come to fruition.

In addition, thanks in part to NCTE’s tireless advocacy, TSA has made major changes to improve trans people’s experiences at the airport, with the removal of gendered body scanners, new training and screening procedures and improvements to gender markers on tickets.

Including recognition of the new X marker.

The Social Security Administration began to phase out the use of gender identity verification later this year, meaning it is removing the requirement that transgender people show proof of identity such as doctor’s notes in order to update their gender information in their social security record. It is also introducing an X gender marker within SSA systems next year and simplifying the process of updating gender markers. NCTE is a long-standing leader in this field and advised the agency on these critical changes.

President Biden’s budget proposal included $10 million to ensure the collection of gender identity and sexual orientation data in the American Community Survey, more progress that NCTE has been advocating for since our organization was founded nearly 20 years ago.
At The United We Stand Summit held at the White House on Sept. 15, NCTE Executive Director Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen spoke of the increasing attacks on our community.

“We see examples every day of the rising threat from violence fueled by extremism and hate,” he said. “Whether you’re transgender or not, black, white or brown, born in the United States or a newcomer to our country, extremism and hate impact all of our lives and put all of us at risk. Violence against transgender people, particularly Black transgender women, is on the rise, stoked by attacks from some politicians who want to divide our communities for political gain.

The Biden-Harris administration recognizes the danger of hate-fueled violence and is taking a stand against it. President Biden understands the severity of anti-trans violence and the risk that hate and extremism pose to our democracy, and he’s doing something about it.”

The Biden administration released transgender-supportive guidance to state child welfare agencies that reaffirms their commitment to protecting trans youth and their families. NCTE has been with the administration every step of the way, and together we are ensuring that the discriminatory assault on trans children will not stand.

We know that gender-affirming health care saves lives, can improve mental health and reduce depression and anxiety.

Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen, NCTE Executive Director
On the 50th anniversary of Title IX, the Department of Education announced a new proposed Title IX rule advancing the goal of addressing discrimination, harassment and violence based on gender in our education system. NCTE welcomed this groundbreaking proposal to expand Title IX protections to transgender students.

Title IX is the foundation that ensures that our education system is equitable and accessible to people of all genders. This proposed rule is an important next step in the push to develop comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for the transgender community nationwide. The right of all of our children to study, play sports and feel valued and validated is vital to all our futures.
NCTE provided public comment and guidance to the Biden-Harris Administration’s proposed Health and Human Services (HHS) regulation for Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act by calling for the specific inclusion of language recognizing transgender and nonbinary status as a protected identity from discrimination in health care settings.

Our #ProtectTransHealth campaign urged the public to support the regulation, which contains a stronger definition of what forms of discrimination are barred, including discrimination on the basis of sex, sex characteristics, and sex stereotypes. NCTE pushed for more specific inclusion of transgender and non-binary status that will make obtaining medically necessary care and health insurance coverage more straightforward and make it easier to report discrimination.

The increasing threat of states attempting to criminalize gender affirming medical care and abortion by certain lawmakers have strengthened bonds between transgender and abortion advocates who both recognize the throughline between these two issues and the concerted effort to restrict or altogether eliminate bodily autonomy and self-determination among transgender and non-binary people, women, low-income people, Black, Indigenous, people of color, disabled communities, and people living with HIV.

NCTE remains committed to the protection of bodily autonomy for all people.

We are human beings, not political pawns, and we demand the right to seek and obtain best-practice health care, free from discrimination, just like everyone else.

C.P. Hoffman, Senior Policy Counsel at NCTE
In November of 2021, the staff of NCTE joined together in a union with the Nonprofit Professional Employees Union (NPEU) to form NCTE United. As we are committed to changes in policy and society to create a better world for transgender people, we are similarly committed to improving the working conditions of our staff, the overwhelmingly majority of whom are transgender.

“This is a historic moment for NCTE,” said Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen. “As a social justice organization, we believe that supporting our employees’ right to form a union can only make us stronger as we continue to fight for justice for the transgender community”.

NCTE has been embedding the process of unionization throughout 2022, and in addition we have made diversity and inclusion a cornerstone of our hiring process.
Olivia spoke movingly at the House Oversight Committee’s hearing on anti-LGBTQ violence. She testified that anti-trans rhetoric and policies coming out of statehouses fuels the wave of anti-trans violence across the country.

Olivia spoke alongside the President of HRC Kelley Robinson, Williams Institute scholar Ilan Meyer, Brandon Wolf, Press Secretary of Equality Florida and survivor of the 2016 attack on Orlando’s Pulse nightclub, as well as survivors of the tragedy at Club Q in Colorado Springs.

This was her testimony:

Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the committee. Thank you very much for convening this hearing and shining a light on the causes of the increasing violence facing the LGBTQ community.

Working at the National Center for Transgender Equality has been a dream job for me since before I started law school, and there’s been no greater honor in my career than being invited here today to speak with the committee on behalf of my community.

This has been a dream job for me, but also a job that I hope will one day no longer be necessary. The past year’s events make it clear, though, that day is still a long way off.

A month ago, my colleagues and I prepared a remembrance report honoring the 47 known transgender Americans whose lives have been lost to violence since November 2021. We released it on November 18. Before dawn on Transgender Day of Remembrance, November 20, the shooting at Club Q meant it was already out of date.

Like all the acts of fatal violence targeting our community, the shooting at Club Q didn’t happen in a vacuum.

This summer, Representative Comer tweeted that we need to examine the root causes of increased violence in America. Today, we’re doing just that.
This violence was catalyzed by a cultural climate filled with anti-LGBTQ legislation, think pieces debating the validity of our humanity under the guise of just asking questions, politicians and public figures encouraging their bases to target and threaten LGBTQ-friendly events and organizations, and fearmongering in the press and on social media.

Most of these attacks and the misinformation that fuels them are targeted at trans people and far too often at trans youth. In 2022, NCTE tracked 207 different pieces of anti-trans legislation across 35 states. Twelve states enacted at least one of these bills. More than 80 percent of them targeted the rights of vulnerable trans youth and young adults.

In addition, this year politicians in several states used administrative rather than legislative processes to attack the rights of trans people. For instance, in Texas the attorney general misused his authority to harass the supportive families of trans children, falsely labeling their support of their children as child abuse.

When politicians and pundits treat trans people’s lives as a matter of public debate, the media responds in kind, giving anti-trans advocates a larger platform to share their hostile rhetoric.

Sensationalist headlines lead stories that care more about attracting clicks and advertising impressions than in reporting the facts.

For example, just days before the Club Q shooting, The New York Times published a front-page article perpetuating misinformation about gender-affirming care for children.

Even when anti-trans policies are defeated, they impact the transgender public. In a 2021 study by The Trevor Project, 85 percent of trans youth reported that the public debates around their civil rights and their place in society left them scared, stressed, angry, and hopeless.

Even more concerning, the same dehumanizing rhetoric that harms trans youth also inflames anti-LGBTQ sentiment among the general public. When politicians and the media paint trans people as something to be treated with fear and disgust, people who are already receptive to that message take it to heart and it reinforces their prejudices. In their minds, trans people either become victims to be saved from ourselves or villains to be punished.

One example of this in action is the misuse of the term ‘groomer’: Anti-LGBTQ activists have appropriated this terminology used by survivors of childhood sexual abuse and used it to slander LGBTQ people and our allies as predatory, harmful toward children.

In reality, trans people are significantly more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse than perpetrators of it. And now this misused terminology has become part of the political discourse around trans people and is invoked as a reason to further restrict our rights in the name of protecting children.
This same rhetoric has subsequently been used as justification for violent anti-LGBTQ activism. Heavily armed protesters have made numerous attacks or attempts at intimidation against family friendly Pride events and drag performances around the country.

Even hospitals have been targeted with bomb threats and intimidation tactics based on social media figures spreading baseless stories that the providers are, in their words, ‘mutilating children.’ There’s a straight line that can be drawn from the legislation trying to strip trans people of our human rights to the increasingly hostile and inflammatory rhetoric portraying us as a threat to society to the acts of violence that have taken far too many lives.

The people engaged in these efforts, from the politicians and media figures who normalize the dehumanization of trans people to the influencers who vilify us on social media to the people brandishing firearms and making bomb threats, bear culpability for the violence that ensues.

The Williams Institute estimates that there are 1.6 million Americans aged 13 and up who are transgender. We live in every state in the nation. We are librarians, we are your baristas, your postal workers, your IT department. We’re your children, your doctors, your nurses, and your ministers. Trans people are also your constituents.

Trans people are part of the fabric of American society. We belong, we deserve to be protected, and we matter.

Thank you.
Dear Friends,

As the attacks on the trans community have escalated over the last year, looking to the future brings a swell of emotions to mind. The threats that the transgender community faced in 2022, and still face in 2023 and the coming years represent a historical watershed moment in the struggle for equality. It is easy to feel daunted & overwhelmed when grappling with these stakes. Despite the scale of these threats, I know that NCTE has never been in a better position to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Looking back at the work we’ve done over the last year, there is no lack of creativity, passion, joy, and conviction of NCTE’s staff. I look towards the future with absolute confidence in our ability to secure greater protections for transgender people in the US.

2023 will mark the 20th anniversary of NCTE’s founding by former Executive Director, Mara Kiesling, and other trans folks, responding to the incredible need to build greater political power for the trans community, giving a voice to those whose voices often go unheard. We look forward to celebrating NCTE’s legacy by carrying on the critical and lifesaving work they began in 2003. It is fitting that on this anniversary, we are preparing the data of 2022’s U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), which received a record-breaking volume of responses. Much like the results of the 2015 USTS, the information captured by the 2022 USTS will be a transformative resource, playing a key role in the future of transgender advocacy for years to come.

NCTE will continue to build a diverse team of talented & brilliant transgender professionals and allies. We will continue to pursue policies & practices that prioritize anti-racist values, ensuring that NCTE remains a safe place for all people of color. We will continue to provide the training & professional development opportunities necessary to help transform talented, burgeoning professionals into the leaders of this movement. In doing so, we will continue to demonstrate to the public that the staff of NCTE, whom I am honored to work with, are the experts on trans rights.

Although the year ahead will be a challenging one, NCTE is prepared to rise to meet that challenge and we are already hard at work. We’re opposing dangerous bans on lifesaving health care, the use of public restrooms, participation in sports, and more. We’re building strong partnerships and coalitions within the movement to elevate & support state-level advocates and activists, helping them to mobilize their communities in support of trans rights. We’re developing new strategies and resources to educate & empower the public to resist the dangerous misinformation disseminated by anti-trans extremists in the media. From the floor of Congress to the streets in Oklahoma, NCTE will ensure that the trans community in the U.S. has their voice heard by the media and by lawmakers at every level.

Most importantly, we will create new opportunities to center trans joy and disrupt a cultural narrative that all too often associates trans life only with the battles that trans people face right now.

I believe that NCTE’s incredible and passionate staff will transform this movement and create the path that will lead us towards a safer, more just, & equitable world for the trans community.

Sincerely,

Jami Westerhold (she/her)
Deputy Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality & NCTE Action Fund
**FINANCIALS**

**SUPPORT AND REVENUE**

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OUR TEAM

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY STAFF

Colton Boyd
Josie Caballero
Alex del Rosario
John Geoffrion
Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen

Olivia Hunt
Oliver Reilly
Sean McCarthy
Shane McGarrah
D. Ojeda

Vida Rangel
Sybastian Smith
Leroy Thomas
Jami Westerhold
Tekla Taylor
Kris Tassone

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY BOARD MEMBERS

Rachel See (President)
Joseph Arroyo
Alex Garnick
Jae Henderson

Samir Luther
Adam McLain-Snipes
Steph Perkins
Gretchen Ruck
Andrea von Kaene

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY ACTION FUND BOARD MEMBERS

Alex Garnick (President)
Joseph Arroyo
Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen

Samir Luther
Adam McLain-Snipes
Rachel See
The National Center for Transgender Equality advocates to change policies and society to increase understanding and acceptance of transgender people. In the nation’s capital and throughout the country, NCTE works to replace disrespect, discrimination, and violence with empathy, opportunity, and justice.

NCTE envisions a society in which transgender people not only survive, but thrive, with accepting families and communities, full self-determination over their identities and bodies, and freedom from disrespect, discrimination and violence. For this vision to become a reality, we must also create equity, equal opportunity, safety, health, and economic well-being for all people over their entire lifetimes.