March 28, 2024 |

Statements

Celebrating International Transgender Day of Visibility

The International Transgender Day of Visibility is a celebration of the transgender and gender diverse members of our community. And it reminds us how important that visibility is: it reduces isolation, sending a clear message to trans people that they are not alone. And it helps to fight fear, ignorance and hate in others, making our community richer and more resilient.

To BC unions, this is an issue of health and safety as well as justice, equity and human rights. Every workplace should be one where transgender workers feel, not isolated, but welcomed, and where they can safely show up as their authentic selves.

A strong, meaningful commitment to transgender equity and inclusion makes us stronger as a community, a province and a movement. We're heartened that British Columbia has a government and premier that share these values, and have taken measures like removing outdated gendered and binary language from provincial laws, funding life affirming surgeries, and ensuring everyone can see their gender identity reflected in something as simple as their government ID.

We're glad too that our schools are leaders in working to become welcoming places for all students — including the SOGI 1 2 3 resources that ensure teachers can draw on age-appropriate materials to create safe, inclusive classrooms that uphold the values of the *BC Human Rights Code*.

We recognize the intersectional dimensions of transphobia: how it reinforces and interacts with other inequities. And we know only too well how much more work there is to do, both within our movement and in the community. We share in the grief and anger felt by so many who are mourning 16-year-old Nex Benedict, the Indigenous non-binary Oklahoma student who died earlier this year after relentless bullying culminating in a physical assault.

Cynical governments and parties — not only in states like Oklahoma, but in Canada as well — are manipulating ignorance and fear for their own political gain. And while those forces are at work in BC too, this province's unions are determined to ensure they will not succeed. We've come too far to allow them to take us backward.

To transgender people throughout BC and everywhere, we join you in celebrating the International Transgender Day of Visibility. And we stand with you in solidarity today and every day.

Resources:

- A guide to messaging in support of trans youth, developed by Momentum, Egale, the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, and LeBlanc & Co. Communications
- Free online courses about gender diversity, from Trans Care BC and the Provincial Health Services Authority
- Information about SOGI 1 2 3 for educators and parents