

COLAGE

October 23, 2023

Dear Chair Breen, Majority Vice Chair Edwards, Minority Vice Chair Fink, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jordan Budd and I am the Executive Director of COLAGE, a national non-profit dedicated to empowering and supporting children of LGBTQ+ families. I am writing on behalf of COLAGE in strong support of the **Michigan Family Protection Act** (and companion bills). This bill package addresses harmful gaps in current Michigan law that directly undermine the welfare of children with LGBTQ+ parents. The passage of these bills will protect LGBTQ+ families and ensure that our families are recognized as equals in the state of Michigan.

For over thirty years, COLAGE has been the only national organization expressly dedicated to supporting people with one or more LGBTQ+ caregivers, uniting them with a network of peers and supporting them as they nurture and empower each other to be skilled, self-confident, and just leaders in their communities. We are committed to bringing about a world where children of LGBTQ+ parents are legally secure, respected and valued for who they are. The Michigan Family Protection Act supports this mission by ensuring that *all children have equal access to secure legal relationships to their parents*.

As it stands, the laws of Michigan disadvantage thousands of children simply because their parents are LGBTQ+. In fact, Michigan is one of the *only* states in the country without fundamental parentage laws that recognize the realities of LGBTQ+ families. We need comprehensive protections securing the relationship between intended parents and their children, and we need clarity that gamete donors are not parents. These deficits directly impact children with LGBTQ+ parents. It harms them in material ways and sends a message to our community that our families are not valued or worthy of protection.

Many children with same-sex parents in Michigan face the untold fear that if conflict or tragedy ever arise, they may be separated from one of their loving parents. They must confront the uncertainty that if a medical emergency should occur, they may



not have access to health insurance, nor could they trust that both their parents could make decisions on their behalf. As a result, *all Michigan children with LGBTQ+ parents* must experience the stigma of knowing that their family is not recognized as equal under the law.

Children should never have to experience the kind of uncertainty and fear that current Michigan law creates for youth of LGBTQ+ parents. Children deserve to be proud of who they are and who their loving family is. We hope the state chooses to protect children of LGBTQ+ parents and, with this bill, cultivates a future in Michigan where all families are valued, protected, and embraced. I urge you to report the Michigan Family Protection Act and associated bills favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jordan Budd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jordan Budd
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