

Daniel:

Thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to speak today, on behalf of the McMaster Queer Student's Community Centre, and our Transgender Community Group. I'm here to speak on behalf of the Transgender and Gender-Non-Conforming Protocol, and to urge you to support it. My name is Daniel, and I moved to Hamilton when I was 17 years old. Still a child, I became quite familiar with the view over my shoulder as I learned my way around the city. I have never felt truly secure here, even in City facilities, where I should be able to trust my rights will be upheld. I hear these same worries echoed at meetings of the McMaster Transgender Community Group, from other young people just like me. And so, I must disagree with our good city's motto. Hamilton cannot be the best place to raise a child until all children – including transgender children – can be safe. I believe that this protocol is a major step in that direction.

Kaiden:

Hello, thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Kaiden Penney and I am also here on behalf of the McMaster Queer Student's Community Centre. I am here as a trans person, and as a member of the Hamilton transgender community. I would like to ask you to support the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Protocol.

I am also here for my younger brother who is transgender like me (and yes, it's entirely possible to have two trans kids in one family). He wanted to come and speak to you today and share his experiences as a 13-year-old trans youth growing up in the City of Hamilton. However, he did not feel that it would be safe for him to appear before you in such a public manner knowing the company that we were going to be in. My brother is proud of who he is and he inspires me everyday. I think the very fact that he did not feel safe speaking to you, the city councillors, speaks volumes about the work that the City of Hamilton has to do for its trans youth. Once again, the city's vision "to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully" does not ring true for its trans children.

Passing this protocol, which simply acknowledges the human rights that transgender and gender non-conforming folks already have according to the Ontario Human Rights Code, will not automatically make the City of Hamilton a safe place for trans children. It will send a clear message that the City of Hamilton supports trans children, but that is not enough. In 2016, the Hamilton City Council adopted a strategic plan that included "Courageous Change" as part of our culture as a city. Actively promoting and following this protocol is what will create real and courageous change for the transgender children of the City of Hamilton. Thank you for your time.