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Sunday , Feb 26, 2017

The Mayor and Councilors
City of Hamilton

Dear Mr Mayor and Councilors,

As a faith community in Hamilton's downtown core, we are writing in support of the proposed Transgender Protocol going to the Audit and Finance Committee on Monday, March 6.

We at New Vision United Church value the diversity of God's creation, and seek to acknowledge and celebrate this diversity in the ways that we interact with our neighbours in Hamilton, and further afield. We are united in the conviction that social justice and inclusion are key to living out the Gospel and to ushering in God's vision for the world.

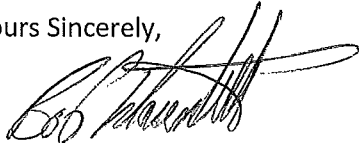
There are many instances in both the Hebrew and Greek Bible where God, God's prophets, Jesus, and Jesus' disciples, bring to light the oppression of marginalized persons, strongly condemn this oppression, advocate for justice, amplify unheard voices, and welcome marginalized persons to the table, often literally, to break bread together.

We feel that when our neighbours are impacted by systemic oppression, it impacts us all. Our view of the rights and accommodations outlined in the Transgender Protocol is that they are basic rights and accommodations that many of us who are cisgender take for granted.

There is clear evidence that trans people are much more vulnerable and at risk than cisgender individuals, whether with relation to being attacked in a public washroom or to attempting suicide as a result of internalized transphobia. We would draw your attention to the 2017 study by researchers at Johns Hopkins and Harvard universities that found a 14% reduction in suicide attempts among LGB adolescents following same-gender marriage legislation in the U.S. The principle behind this outcome can be applied to transgender youth and legal enshrinement of equality. We would venture to suggest that it can be applied to trans adults as well, particularly those who have recently come out/ transitioned or are in the process of coming out/ transitioning. People are particularly vulnerable in these stages of self-integration, and certain trans individuals are more visibly trans. As such, we do not hesitate to support the Trans Protocol's adoption and enactment by City Council.

We leave you with a verse from the book of the prophet, Micah, and invite you into the challenge that it lies before us: "God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Marentette", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Bob Marentette,
Chair, Church Council

And these members of the New Vision United Church

M. M. I.

Signed by 31 members of the New
Vision United Church.

(The original letter is available for viewing in the Office of the City Clerk)