



**SASKATOON
PRIDE**

SASKATOON DIVERSITY NETWORK INC. dba
SASKATOON PRIDE
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STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD OF SASKATOON PRIDE

JUNE 5, 2024

When Saskatoon Pride instituted its parade vetting process our board members felt it might give us an opportunity to forcefully refuse participation by the Sask Party and other political parties whose actions and rhetoric is similar. Events overtook our plan and we were slow to respond because we were committed to our process which would also yield an eventual ban. We apologize to those who felt challenged or unheard as a result of our communications or lack thereof. We believe we were finding a different way of reaching the same conclusion as other Pride organizations, but we understand that we should have listened better and acted sooner and we apologize for leaving people feeling unsupported as a result.

The Board of Directors of Saskatoon Pride thanks members of the queer community who shared their views on the banning of the Sask Party from participating in Saskatoon Pride events either as an organization or individuals representing it. Understandably there is passionate opposition to the Sask Party government as a result of the harm they have unleashed on the queer and trans youth of this province and their families, teachers, and counsellors.

The ongoing anxiety the Sask Party government created when they invoked the notwithstanding clause to avoid the scrutiny and power of the courts thereby limiting the rights of queer and trans young people is both telling and alarming. It shows how far sitting Sask Party members of the day, and particularly the Premier, and the Justice and Education Ministers, will go to appease the extreme right of the province. It shows how easily we as a community could lose, even if temporarily, many of the valuable rights we currently enjoy after fighting so hard for them.

Let's be clear: many of the rights we are speaking of were not available to earlier generations of queer and trans people. Many of us suffered egregious harm with little recourse to the legal system and the courts. Many lost lives, family, jobs, housing, potential to be who they aspired to be. Saskatoon Pride will stand with other community organizations and individuals and together we will not permit that nightmare to happen again.

Thank you to those individuals who generously gave of their time to serve as reviewers in our parade vetting process which is now complete. At this point there is nothing in the way of us doing what we should have when we activated our vetting process: make it understood that even reviewing a parade application

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for the Sask Party was futile—given their attack on rights of queer and trans youth there was no way in which our board would approve their participation in our festival.

To make it even clearer: the Sask Party and its members who stood up and answered “Yea” to Bill 137 are banned from our 2024 Pride Parade and other Festival activities and events. They are not allies to two spirit, trans, or other queer people in this province. Their voting record and rhetoric is disgraceful. How to move forward? Repeal Bill 137 and a wary conversation can begin.

In solidarity,

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SASKATOON DIVERSITY NETWORK INC. (SASKATOON PRIDE)