

# Trans Youth Prom at the Capitol

## Trans Youth: We Are Here

We come together today, May 22nd, 2023, in Washington, D.C., as Trans and Non-Binary Youth, to cultivate and celebrate our vision and our story. We gather in celebration of who we are, what we bring to the world, and the freedom, imagination and magic that we represent.

*To those in power, to those who don't understand us, to those who debate and question us, and to those who simply aren't paying attention, we want you to know this:*

1. We love who we are.
2. We honor and thank our transcestors who paved the way for us to imagine our existence and find ourselves. The fact that more of us feel free to proclaim who we are is something to be celebrated not feared.
3. No one made us trans or non-binary - not our parents, not our schools, not the Internet, not our friends. We gather together as trans and non-binary people not to make others be like us, but to find and grow and learn from others who are like us.
4. Being trans and/or non-binary is a beautiful, core part of who we are, but it is not all we are. We are children, adolescents, and young adults who have dreams about our futures, hope for our present, and knowledge of our history.
5. Just like you, we have a core understanding of who we are. We have spent our young lives self-reflecting, challenging people and institutions who do not believe us, fearing for our safety, and still, knowing exactly who we are.
6. We recognize that our liberation is tied up in yours. We believe that all people deserve access to the health care that they need so that we can all live full, free, and beautiful lives.
7. So much of what you hear about us is about all the ways we are miserable or victimized. And it is true that we, on average, have poorer mental health outcomes, face staggering rates of violence, and experience painful rejection and discrimination. All of this is not because we are trans but rather, because we live in a world that rejects us as such. When we are able to live freely and congregate together and celebrate our joy, we feel the beautiful possibility we represent.
8. As politicians deploy opportunistic attacks against us, don't fall for it. We are children, adolescents and young adults who want to enjoy our childhoods. We want to go to school, play sports, have prom, explore the world, and just...live. Don't be a mark for the people who want to take our freedom on the way to taking yours.
9. Certain things are not up for debate: (1) the fact that we exist; (2) the fact that gender-affirming health care has saved our lives and enabled us to thrive; (3) the fact that our gender is just as real as yours; (4) the fact that our presence in the world - whether in the restroom, on a sports team, in the classroom, or in the street - does nothing to threaten others.
10. Our joy is ours. You may not see it, you may not think it exists, you may try to take it away. But it is ours. And today, and every day, we celebrate, cultivate and embrace it.