

April 8, 2015

Dear Lisa,

As you know, last summer NCLR signed the petition sponsored by Equality Michigan calling on the organizers of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (Michfest) to embrace the presence of transgender women at the iconic gathering. In the wake of our signing, you contacted us to express your disappointment and anger that NCLR would sign a petition which called for a boycott of the festival.

Many of the letters we received recognized transgender women as women and sisters in struggle, while also arguing that the intention of Michfest does not diminish the lived experience of transgender women.

Since then, we have been involved in a number of conversations with Michfest womyn, Equality Michigan, transgender leaders and colleagues who signed the petition. These conversations have made clear that there are essential values and perspectives we all share and that the petition was not going to be an effective vehicle for a resolution.

NCLR has removed our name from the petition and will be actively engaged in conversations in which we honor our differences while also pursuing a conclusion that supports the gender identity and inclusion of all women in Michfest. We have faith that such a resolution is possible.

This entire process has been one of great learning for me and, while we may disagree on some issues, I think there are many values we share. I signed the petition on behalf of NCLR because our core passion and commitment is that we all be able to live fully and be embraced as our authentic selves.

We are grounded in some deeply held principles, including the belief that discrimination and bigotry against lesbians is rooted in sexism, misogyny and the devaluation of women. We do not believe it is possible to win liberation for lesbians in a world where misogyny thrives. We also do not believe we can end the oppression of women and lesbians in a world where transgender women are reviled and targeted.

NCLR has come to a deeper understanding of what Michfest means to our community and seeks to honor that through this process. We also acknowledge the Michfest organizers have been involved in an ongoing conversation over the years on this issue. We are committed to honest and forthright dialogue as a more constructive means for seeking resolution and common ground.

Sincerely,

Kate