

From: Rea Carey <rcarey@thetaskforce.org>
Subject: Michigan Womyn's Music Festival
Date: April 10, 2015 at 8:15:40 AM EDT
To: Rea Carey <rcarey@thetaskforce.org>

Greetings,

Last year, the National LGBTQ Task Force signed onto a petition organized by Equality Michigan which called upon the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (Michfest) to fully welcome and include transgender women, as women, at the festival.

You took the time to write to me and I appreciate that you did – you and others shared with me your perspectives and experiences on the land that some described as “sacred,” “an annual touchstone,” “iconic” and “home.” I heard that you are angry and hurt by the Task Force and other organizations signing the petition. I heard from you and others that Michfest is a truly historic and transformative annual event that has influenced, inspired and helped to liberate millions of womyn/women from the daily trials and tribulations of misogyny and sexism. It holds a very special place in the hearts of lesbians and other womyn/women.

In the months between then and now, I have talked with womyn/women who have attended, womyn/women who would like to attend, and other people who have a variety of views. I've talked with our colleagues at Equality Michigan, leaders of other organizations who have been engaged in this, and with transgender women. From these conversations, I have gleaned shared values, differing opinions, and have come to a view that in order to move forward in any type of dialogue we must move beyond the petition.

I am writing to let you know that the Task Force has asked that our name be removed from the Equality Michigan petition and we will be seeking other ways to be in dialogue about Michfest's intention regarding transgender women. As we reflected on the petition's contents and read carefully letters from concerned people like you, we came to understand that the point in the original petition that called for a boycott of vendors and performers was misaligned with our own support for womyn/women artists, craftspeople and musicians. Although that point was withdrawn from the petition, we recognize and share the deep concern about the possible economic impact on womyn/women striving every day to make a living through their art, craft and music.

Please know that the Task Force's view regarding the MichFest intention is rooted in our core value of inclusiveness and the festival's extraordinary transformative power. For over 40 years, the Task Force has worked for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer identified people in all areas of our lives – whether it be in the workplace, the government, companies and, yes, in our own community.

The Task Force will remain in active discussion with MichFest womyn/women, Equality Michigan, transgender colleagues, and other organizations that signed the petition. The Task Force is committed to productive discussions in which we honor our differences and also pursue our desire for MichFest to fully welcome the gender identities of all womyn/women at the festival, including transgender women.

For over 40 years, the Task Force has worked for a changed world. A world in which we can all experience liberation. A world in which misogyny cannot thrive. A world in which womyn/women, lesbians, bisexual women and transgender women no longer experience sexism, targeted attacks and the most horrible form of violence – murder. As we intensify our work to take on all of the challenges we face as a movement, know that these values are at the heart of what we do.

With care and in solidarity,

Rea