

ETFO strongly condemns anti-2SLGBTQ+ protests

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TORONTO, ON – Today, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) issued the following statement responding to 1 Million March 4 Children protests that are scheduled to take place across Canada this week:

“Any actions or events that seek to undermine the rights and dignity of the 2SLGBTQ+ community must be denounced. As such, ETFO strongly condemns this week’s planned protests, and calls on the government and school boards to do the same.

There is no room for hate in our province or our hearts. Yet we are seeing a disturbing increase in public discourse centred on anti-2SLGBTQ+ hate. It is alarming that several politicians are contributing to this troubling trend. Recently, Premier Doug Ford accused school boards of indoctrination. Education Minister Stephen Lecce scolded boards for upholding students’ human rights related to gender identity, and members of parliament are on social media using dog-whistle terms like ‘woke’ to gain political clout. Instead of spewing rhetoric they know is harmful and dangerous and that pits parents against educators, they should be ensuring safe and inclusive spaces for every student in the province and for every constituent they serve.

We are hearing that students and members, especially those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, are frightened and concerned about the protests, in particular those being held near schools. Action must be taken to ensure safety.

We encourage all Canadians to engage in constructive conversations, to listen to differing perspectives, to reject bigotry, and to work together to build a more inclusive and equitable society for all. Through education and respectful dialogue, we can bridge gaps and create environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected. But first, we must embrace diversity and acceptance.

In this time of emboldened hate, let us stand together against transphobia and homophobia, and protect those who are targets of bigotry and discrimination. We commend school boards for their unwavering commitment to ensuring all students feel safe and included.

ETFO will continue to advocate for members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and work to protect the rights of vulnerable individuals who continue to be discriminated against, marginalized, and harmed.”

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