

WITNESS for JUSTICE

A weekly commentary from
the United Church of Christ

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HB2

by **John C. Dorhauer**
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I am not transgender.

I cannot know what the struggle is like to claim your identity in a culture like ours, where even the power of the state is brought to bear to enact discriminatory laws that embolden hatred, vitriol, and ignorance.

Elected officials take an oath to protect the Constitution. They assume a responsibility to preserve the rights of its citizens – especially those whom bullies threaten.

On March 23rd – when the North Carolina House voted overwhelmingly to pass a law forcing its citizens to use rest rooms for the gender listed on their birth certificate; when hours later the NC Senate voted unanimously to support the bill (those opposing it having walked out of the vote in protest); and when NC Governor McCrory later signed the bill into law – every one of them abrogated their essential duties and let the bullies take over the state. I have no qualms calling each of those legislators, and the Governor himself, a bully.

I believe that in time this law will be deemed unconstitutional. Lawyers are already pursuing that course of action. In the meantime, innocent people find themselves threatened by and victimized by a state government out of control. That transgender citizens now have to worry about the best way to take care of their bathroom needs in public is awful. What is worse is that the ignorant bigots who fueled this hatred, bullies all, now have little reason to doubt that the state won't challenge whatever other actions such bullies give themselves permission to undertake.

My outrage over this cannot be contained; I have no desire to contain it.

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



I am glad that companies like Paypal have chosen to abandon the state because of this action. When the Arizona legislature passed the equally regressive SB1070 in 2010 (a bill that did as much damage to immigrant justice as HB2 does to LGBT justice), the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ called for a boycott of the state and moved its Annual Meeting out of Arizona and into New Mexico. Others businesses followed, and the economic impact kept the state from passing even more regressive laws the following year.

Activists and advocates must respond. This weekend while in North Carolina, I chose to eat at a restaurant that had a “Safe Space” rainbow sticker on its window. I wore a t-shirt that was given to me that read “#wearenotthis; Repeal HB2 – HUCC”, (the HUCC stands for Hillsborough United Church of Christ, a church that has had its rainbow flags stolen and burned). I preached at United Church of Chapel Hill, a church that has gender-neutral bathrooms.

There is much more to be done. There is so much more to learn. I only ask that you not do nothing. Learn more about this bill and the hatred behind it. 38 states with “family policy councils” are pressing for bills like this to be passed. Find out if your state is one – and take action now. Stand up for the rights of all God’s beautiful children.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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