

March 12, 2019

Indiana House Speaker
Brian C. Bosma
Indiana House Republicans
200 W. Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Speaker Bosma, Senate President Bray, Representative Steuerwald and Representative Cook:

As presidents of Indiana's independent colleges and universities, we are writing to you about the effort from our state's legislature to pass an effective, enforceable and comprehensive bias crimes law.

We were deeply disappointed last week to see the Indiana Senate pass a bias crimes bill without the policy teeth it needs to be a real bias crimes law. Senate Bill 12 does not meet the standard of a comprehensive bias crimes bill, nor does it meet the needs and expectations of more than 74% of Hoosiers who have voiced their support for meaningful action on this issue.

We are firmly convinced that a bias crimes law without an enumerated list of characteristics is not a functional bias crimes law. We ask that you add the enumerated list characteristics that originally sailed through the Senate committee by a 9-1 vote, and pass a bias crimes law that truly has the potential to work.

For too long, Indiana has suffered the negative perception as one of the five states in the nation without a hate crimes law. The world doubts that we care about our family, friends, and neighbors or that we are unwelcoming of others. And there are many in our community – including many of the students, faculty and staff we represent – who feel that Indiana is a place they don't belong.

We are fortunate to recruit the best and brightest scholars – from Indiana and across the world – to our colleges, but we hear too frequently that our soon-to-be graduates would consider more welcoming places in lieu of the Hoosier State. We risk not only losing their talent, but also the talent of thousands of future students, graduates and all who might consider Indiana an attractive place to live, learn, work or do business.

Retaining this talent requires bold action to improve our state's image. Passing a comprehensive bias crimes law with an enumerated list of characteristics is critical to that mission.

As the leaders of respective college and university campuses, we work diligently to create welcoming and inclusive environments. We educate some of the nation's most accomplished students, and we want to keep them in Indiana. The message that the original SB12 sent to them was loud and clear: they are welcomed and valued in the Hoosier State and warrant representation on a specific, enumerated list of characteristics in Indiana's bias crimes bill. That, sadly, is no longer the case.

We must let all Hoosiers and every American know that they are welcome and protected in our state.

Passing SB 12 as it stands today – without explicitly listing specific classes – will bring more harm to our state and further perpetuate the negative perception of Indiana. It will push out more of our students

and detract more talent from coming in. We urge you to answer Governor Holcomb's call to pass comprehensive bias crimes legislation that includes a list of enumerated characteristics.

The nation is watching. Our Hoosier communities are watching. Our students, staff, and faculties from around the world are watching. Let's make sure Indiana is on the right side of history.

Sincerely,



James M. Danko
President
Butler University



D. Mark McCoy, Ph.D.
President
DePauw University



Avis Stewart
Interim President
Earlham College



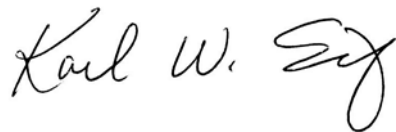
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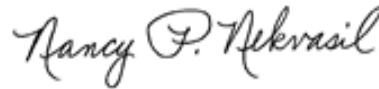
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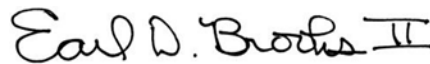
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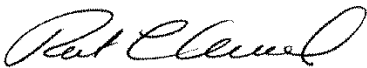
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