

Dear Public Safety Committee Members,

QUEERSPACE collective, a MN LGBTQ+ youth organization, encourages you to pass HF 1712 in order to provide additional support for at-risk youth.

QUEERSPACE collective's mission is to create space for LGBTQ+ youth to feel safe and empowered to be their true selves. Our vision is for all LGBTQ+ youth to have a network of support to help them develop a strong sense of pride in who they are, where they come from, and where they want to go. Through mentorship, training and advocacy, QUEERSPACE collective creates space for LGBTQ+ youth to feel safe and empowered to be their true selves.

QUEERSPACE hangouts, an initiative of QUEERSPACE collective (QUEERSPACE), is a youth-centric intergenerational mentorship program creating safe, inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and LGBTQ+ adults to connect as their authentic selves. As part of the LGBTQ+ community, LGBTQ+ adults understand the challenges, pains and joys of "coming out" and the need for youth to have positive role models and a supportive community. Through 1:1 and group events, LGBTQ+ youth develop increased self-esteem and a greater sense of belonging, cultural identity and pride.

With the ongoing rise of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation across our nation and the majority of the youth in our program identifying as transgender or gender non-conforming, it is important now more than ever that these young people have space where they feel comfortable showing up as their authentic. Passing HF 1712 will provide much needed additional resources for the LGBTQ+ youth in our communities. It will allow us to provide additional mentoring resources, training to other youth organizations on how they can be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ youth, and resources for caregivers and mentors.

Thank you for all you do to support our future leaders.

Warmly,
Nicki Hangsleben (she/they)
Executive Director & Founder
QUEERSPACE collective

