

ALESSANDRA SOLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DALE BAICH
PRESIDENT



VIA EMAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL

April 19, 2017

Mayor Jim Lane and City Council
City of Scottsdale
3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
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**AMERICAN CIVIL
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Dear Mayor Lane and Scottsdale City Council:

In June 2016, the board of directors of Great Hearts Academies adopted a policy that denies the dignity and autonomy of transgender students.

For this reason, the ACLU of Arizona, a nonpartisan civil liberties organization with roughly 10,000 members statewide, urges you to decline Great Hearts' proposal for the public park within DC Rach until the organization adopts a policy that allows transgender students to live and learn as their true selves.

To do otherwise would make the City of Scottsdale complicit in discrimination against transgender people. Scottsdale would be offering exclusive park access to athletic teams that sideline transgender players.

The current Great Hearts policy allows school staff to mistreat transgender students by classifying them in accordance with their sex assigned at birth, not their gender identity. The policy applies to what name and restroom students can use, the uniform and grooming standards they must follow, and their eligibility for athletic teams.

Great Hearts' policy isolates, stigmatizes, and delegitimizes transgender people.

We have already heard from several families that suffered significant harm because of Great Hearts' discriminatory, anti-transgender policy. No person should ever have to endure the indignities that Great Hearts imposes on transgender students and their families.

It can be traumatizing for a transgender person to be forced back into the closet or prevented from coming out. In the case of Great Hearts, which operates public charter schools, it is also against the law. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 protects all students, including transgender and gender-nonconforming students, from sex discrimination. Barring a transgender student from sex-segregated spaces like restrooms, locker rooms, and athletic teams that are consistent with the gender the student lives every day is a constitutional and civil rights violation.

But we don't need a law to tell us what experience makes clear: It makes a world of difference to transgender students when their teachers and peers address them with the correct name and pronouns, and their administrators allow them to use facilities and play on teams in accordance with their gender identity.

Do not sanction a space where discrimination against transgender people will go unchecked. Deny Great Hearts' proposal for the DC Ranch park until the organization demonstrates it will treat all students equally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Soler', written in a cursive style.

Alessandra Soler
Executive Director

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