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Central Florida's LGBTQ+ & Ally Community to Hold Press Conference Against Discriminatory Legislation

ORLANDO, Fla.- The Pride Chamber, The Central Florida Corporate Equality Council, The Center Orlando, and Partner Community Organizations stand in firm opposition to [FL House Bill 599](#).

HB 599, which makes sweeping changes to Florida employment statutes, threatens to undermine the rights and dignity of the LGBTQ+ community.

This proposed legislation declares that "a person's sex is an immutable biological trait" and takes alarming steps to enforce this notion. It would prohibit government employees or contractors from using a person's pronouns that "do not correspond to his or her sex." Furthermore, it would bar employers from even asking workers to state their own pronouns, preventing open and inclusive workplace communication. Most concerning, the bill will silence trans employees by prohibiting them from sharing their pronouns if they differ from their assigned sex.

Additionally, this bill would restrict tax-exempt nonprofits and state-funded employers from providing any training or instruction on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Instead, it proposes so-called "deeply held biology-based beliefs" as a shield, introducing a new form of discrimination that jeopardizes the progress made toward equality.

In response to this regressive legislation, The Pride Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a press conference on Monday, December 11, 2023, at 10:45 am at The Center - Orlando located at 946 N. Mills Ave. Orlando, FL

Speakers Include:

- **Denise Merritt, Board Chair/ The Pride Chamber**
- **Dr. George Wallace, Chief Executive Officer, The Center Orlando**
- **State Senator Linda Stewart**
- **Heather Wilkie, Executive Director, Zebra Youth**
- **State Representative Rita Harris**

Orlando City Commissioner Patty Sheehan

- **Former State Rep. Carlos Guillermo Smith on behalf of Equality Florida**
- **Gina Duncan, Equality Florida Central Florida Development Director**
- **Hon. Daniel H. Sohn, President/ CEO, The Pride Chamber**

The LGBTQ+ community and its allies will unite to condemn HB 599, emphasizing that our community will not be erased. This event will serve as a powerful platform for community leaders, activists, and allies to express their unwavering commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and the protection of LGBTQ+ rights.

Media representatives, community members, and concerned citizens are invited to attend the press conference and support the collective voice against discriminatory practices.

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