

PRESS RELEASE

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PROTECT TRANS KIDS; Queer Activists, Anti-Fascists, and Trans People Unite Against Hate

Tio'tia:ke/Mooniyang/Montréal – [20th of September, 2024] – A coalition of **Queer activists, anti-fascists, and trans people of many different walks of life [The coalition]** are mobilizing to counter the spread of hate and discrimination this Friday **September 20th**. In response to recent calls for nationwide protests by right-wing organizations like Hands Off Our Kids (HOOK) and Ensemble Pour Protéger Nos Enfants (EPPNE), the coalition is organizing a counter-demonstration **September 20th** at **Place Vauquelin - 275 Notre Dame** in Montreal starting **8:00 am**. The counter-demonstration will feature a variety of activities, including speeches, performances, and music. The goal is to fight for the protection of trans children everywhere, from Turtle Island to Palestine, advocating against the rise of hatred in Canada while sending a message of solidarity and support for trans youth across the world. Three spokespeople for the counter-demonstration will be available for interviews between **7:30am-9:30am**; **Aziz Jamil (they/he)**- Intervention Worker, **Rebecca Lavoie (they/them)** - Activist Faction Against Genocide, in Solidarity (F.A.G.S.) and **Zev Saltiel (he/they)** - Register Social Worker, Intervention Worker and Parent.

The conservative groups HOOK and EPPNE have been actively promoting harmful rhetoric against trans individuals and LGBTQ+ rights, falsely claiming that schools are indoctrinating children and undermining parental authority. Their efforts have led to increased discrimination, harassment, and threats against marginalized communities: The mobilization of anti-trans and anti-drag protestors last year gave rise to the Comité des Sages, who has worked hand in hand with EPPNE to slow pro-trans reforms throughout the provincial government.

However, the coalition won't stay silent. They are here to march for the protection of all kids, regardless of their gender or sexual identity. "We are fighting towards the same goal, only ours includes the protection and wellbeing of trans and queer youth, youth who have queer and trans parents or loved ones, or youth who have trans and queer friends. We are fighting for youth in ALL of their intersecting identities." said Zev Saltiel. The measures that EPPNE and HOOK are advocating for will have a direct impact on trans children's mental health, the coalition seeks to counter their efforts and to protect trans and queer children.

Adam Philomena from the Centre for Gender Advocacy, an independent non-profit organization which spearheaded the [historic court case against the Attorney General of Quebec](#) advocating for the rights of trans youth in Quebec, says: "This counter-protest is absolutely necessary in the times we are living in, and we commend the organizers for their tireless efforts in advocating for our community. Trans children and youth deserve protection now and always, and they deserve safe and welcoming homes where they are free to express themselves and explore their

identities without judgement. Moreover, it is vital that cis het students also learn about the existence of queer realities-- this is not indoctrination, it is education. To deny young students of this knowledge is to deny them an education which speaks to the realities of our world. We are here to fight for Arab trans youth, Muslim trans youth, Black trans youth, Indigiqueer and Two-Spirit youth, and all trans kids and youth deserving of safety and acceptance."

"We believe that teaching children about the mere existence of trans and queer people is beneficial for both queer and straight children," said [Aziz Jamil, intervention worker], a spokesperson for the coalition. "Queerness and transness have always existed, and not talking about it increases hatred towards our community and the chances of mental health struggles amongst queer children. Queer children deserve a safe space, and if home cannot be that for them, it needs to be school. Without my teachers helping me navigate my gender and sexuality and most importantly their respect for my confidentiality, I am not confident I would be alive today. This is a matter of safety, of life and death for queer and trans children." reiterates (Rebecca Lavoie, an activist from FAGS). [A study published by the Canadian Medical Association Journal \(CMAJ\) found that 2SLGBTQ+ youth are at a disproportionately higher risk of suicidality and suicidal ideation](#), with transgender youth having 5 times the risk of suicidal ideation and 7.6 times higher risk of attempted suicide. These staggering numbers reflect the importance of the coalition's overarching goal, to **"Protect Trans Kids"**.

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About us: The coalition to *Protect All Trans Children* is an ad hoc group of queer activists, antifascists, and trans individuals from diverse backgrounds who have come together to organize a counter-demonstration as a political counterweight to the transphobic demands of organizations like Hands Off Our Kids (HOOK) and Ensemble Pour Protéger Nos Enfants (EPPNE), which are attacking the rights of the entire 2SLGBTQ+ community.