Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to express my concern over remarks you made over the weekend concerning transgender students and the use of pronouns in schools. You stated that parents should know what pronouns students have requested for themselves at school. This would mean that students who were coming out at school, as queer and/or transgendered, would be automatically outed to their parents by the school administrators and teachers.

This would pose a serious, and even a grave risk for many of these students. We do not live in a society where all parents easily accept gender non-conforming behaviour in their children. Some parents are hostile to queer identities. For a queer child growing up in that kind of household, school may be a safe space where they can be themselves without parental disdain, and even abuse. Outing children to their parents before the children are ready to do so is a cruel and unnecessary invasion of personal privacy.

Under a pronoun-reporting policy, students would be faced with a terrible choice. Ask for preferred pronouns to be used at school, and risk being outed to hostile parents; or keep it all secret, from the school and home, risking serious psychological suffering. The stakes are high, Mr. Premier. Surveys of youth in Toronto homeless shelters have found that 23% identify as LGBTQ, many of whom are runaways. They flee parents who could not accept their queer identity. Suicidal thoughts among queer teens are also much higher than among straight teens. Please abandon this policy before it becomes official.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address: