



*For Immediate Release*

Contact:

Ciora Thomas, SisTers PGH, (412) 636-7613, [ciora.thomas@sisterspgh.org](mailto:ciora.thomas@sisterspgh.org)

Mitchell Hortert, PFLAG Pittsburgh, (412) 538-7267, [info@pflagpgh.org](mailto:info@pflagpgh.org)

Cheryl Kleiman, Education Law Center, (412) 258-2124, [ckleiman@elc-pa.org](mailto:ckleiman@elc-pa.org)

### **ADVOCATES CONDEMN ANTI-LGBTQ ACTION**

Pittsburgh – (October 5, 2017)

Education Law Center of Pennsylvania, PFLAG Pittsburgh, and SisTers PGH released the following statement in response to planned protests by the anti-LGBTQ Westboro Baptist Church in Allegheny County:

“As youth and civil rights advocates, we are appalled to learn of plans by the Westboro Baptist Church to disrupt the lives of students at Pine-Richland High School and in Pittsburgh.

Protests organized by Westboro Baptist Church tend to be small, but their rhetoric of hate and hostility is loud – and the antithesis of the equality that all school children are entitled to under the law. Inclusive policies at schools should be applauded, not protested. We fully support policies and practices that affirm the dignity and civil rights of LGBTQ youth, and we stand in solidarity with our students, parents, and educators against hate.

We cannot stop fighting for liberation. We call out and lift up the leadership of trans- and people of color-led organizations, like SisTers PGH, who have been doing this work long before it made headlines, and to whom we turn to for vision and guidance. We also recognize the importance of supportive, affirming families in this movement, like those represented in PFLAG Pittsburgh.

Together, we will make clear that our public schools are no place for hate and that all students should feel welcomed, safe, and affirmed.”

SisTers PGH was created to aid and rehabilitate transgender and people of color and impoverished individuals, those that have been victimized by a society that does not allow them to thrive within the community with permanent solutions to marginalization. At the heart of its mission is shelter and permanent affordable housing for the trans and GNC communities of Western Pennsylvania. By educating transgender issues and people of color through outreach, housing, and advocacy, we help to empower trans people within their communities. To learn more about SisTers PGH, visit: [www.facebook.com/sistersPGH](http://www.facebook.com/sistersPGH)

PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Pittsburgh promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure civil rights. To learn more about PFLAG Pittsburgh, please visit: [www.pflagpgh.org](http://www.pflagpgh.org)

The Education Law Center is a non-profit legal advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all of Pennsylvania's children have access to a quality public education. We are proud to have recently brought on a legal fellow with support from the Stoneleigh Foundation who is focusing on reducing the barriers faced by LGBTQ students in accessing high-quality public education. To learn more about the Education Law Center, please visit [www.elc-pa.org](http://www.elc-pa.org). To learn more about our LGBTQ project, please see the associated flyer at: [bit.ly/2fPTDyd](http://bit.ly/2fPTDyd)

###