

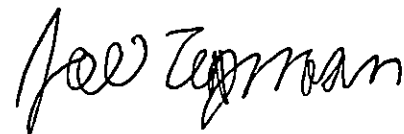
Madam Chair McLachlan and Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Joel Zigman, I'm here representing myself. I am here to support the amendment to HB19-1192 that would make recommendations to include the history, cultural, and social contributions of LGBTQ people in the teaching and content standards for history and civics.

I teach music at Leawood Elementary and Dutch Creek Elementary Schools, this is my second year as a teacher in Jeffco schools. I am a union member of JCEA and lead organizer of the Jeffco LGBTQ Educator Group. I am also transgender. When I was growing up I didn't have words for my gender identity, my picture of transgender people was colored by news stories about 'pregnant freaks'. It wasn't until I was in college that I learned about the Stonewall riots, Marsha P. Johnson, Audre Lorde, Harvey Milk, Leslie Feinberg, Kate Bornstein. Powerful voices in the LGBTQ community who have been marginalized in history. Not to mention I discovered that as a musician, many of our great composers throughout history have been gay, including Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, John Cage, Samuel Barber, even Tchaikovsky. But it took me getting to a very dark, hopeless place with my own mental and physical health before I finally found role models who inspired me to live life as my fullest self.

Every year students see the poster in my classroom that says this is a safe space for lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender people and thank me for hanging it up. Just last week a 4th grader told me that it meant a lot to him, because his sister is lesbian, and it makes him happy to come to music class. Students need to see themselves reflected in the curriculum to build self-efficacy, self-confidence, and see a pathway to success. This is true across the state, because all school communities will have LGBTQ students. That is why I am in favor of HB1192 and the amendment to include LGBTQ people in our history curriculum.

Thank you, Mrs. Chairman and committee members, for this opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Zigman". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.