

Janzen, Heather

Subject: FW: Email - Request to Speak - Niko Nelson - Denounce 1 Million March 4 Children - CK 100-26
Attachments: LettertoCouncil (1).pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 11:26 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Request to Speak - Niko Nelson - Denounce 1 Million March 4 Children - CK 100-26

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Sunday, March 23, 2025 - 23:24

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Sunday, March 23, 2025

To: Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name: Niko

Last Name: Nelson

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: NEE-koh

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] Glacial Shores Manor [REDACTED]

Ward: Not Sure

What do you wish to do ?: Request to Speak

If speaking will you be attending in person or remotely: In person

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Regular Business Meeting on Wednesday March 26, 2025 at 9:30am

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: 8.5.1 Blake Tait - Denounce 1 Million March for Children GPC2023-1103

Comments:

My letter is attached. I am submitting a second time to include the first 3 characters to my postal code.

Attachments:

- [LettertoCouncil \(1\).pdf](#)48.98 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

My name is Niko.

I am vice chair of the non-profit, Gender Queer Coffee Club, a small business owner, and a mental health counselor. I have facilitated therapeutic groups for gender diverse individuals through OUT Saskatoon and founded my own skillshare and social group, The Lost Boys. Over and over again, I have created sanctuary-style spaces for my community. I invest in these spaces as both a colleague and peer, in that I myself, am transgender.

In reflection of the recent declaration of Saskatoon as a sanctuary city, I would like to share my child's experience in school and ask a reflective question:

My son attended first grade last year in a Saskatoon public school. He was asked to present a powerpoint presentation on a holiday his family celebrates for a cultural diversity project. He chose Pride. My son, who is also ADHD and autistic, spent several nights explaining to me in detail the content he wanted to include around the meaning of the colors of the Pride flag and how some of those represented our family. The project was submitted on time and I received a call. Throughout several meetings with the school, a principal and later, a superintendent would inform me that the words "nonbinary" and "transgender" could not be printed on the slides nor spoken in class. And, should they not be removed, my child could not present his project about his own family. The superintendent later informed me that, in her professional opinion, the words "transgender" and "nonbinary" were inappropriate for grade 1 and she instructs all schools under her direction not to include any LGBTQ content as it is both not in the curriculum and the new pronoun mandate played a factor in this decision.

How can we call ourselves a sanctuary, a place of refuge or safety, if we cannot even speak our own name?

I am a dual citizen of Canada and the United States. I moved to Saskatoon in 2019 as a permanent resident and became a Canadian citizen in 2024. I moved here, and choose to live here and raise my children here because I believe Canada to be better. My community is well aware of the horrors that face gender diverse people south of our border and many are experiencing how those attitudes have and continue to trickle northwards, impacting their everyday lives. We experience increasingly aggressive, hateful rhetoric daily on the micro, mezzo and macro level.

It is my hope and encouragement that as we go forward into making Saskatoon as a sanctuary city, not just as a declaration, but a reality, that we keep a running goal of how we can be different from that of the current politics of the United States. That we observe honestly how we may have already incorporated an accidental echo of hate-based politics in our social spheres? And how might, through humility, could we turn our habits around and reclaim a more Canadian lens on gender diversity? These questions, among others, will help to create a foundation for Saskatoon as a sanctuary.

I am asking for those behind the desk at every level to sincerely engage with the gender diverse

people of whom they represent and publicly serve, as implementation of a new effort or policy is only made stronger from thorough research. I am asking also that we follow-through earnestly on our declaration of making Saskatoon a true sanctuary city instead of virtue signaling while a community is scapegoated at the expense of a politician's desire for votes.

I look forward to seeing progress made towards a felt sense of safety for gender diverse people at all levels of Saskatoon, which may take some time, but can be done. We are a growing city and with that, diversity will come. I, as an individual, will continue my work within my community to provide support during this time, and I personally invite any city council member or community member who wishes to be a better ally, to understand our lived experiences, to sit with me, have a coffee and glean a different perspective from someone who has the time and desire to explain it. Not many gender diverse people do have the time, because like everyone else, they are working and trying to make ends meet, while also being faced with discrimination and erasure. Saskatoon is not yet a sanctuary, but I have faith that it can become one if our city would sit with us, know us and let us speak our names.