From: Chelsea Cooper
To: Shane McFarland; bschacklett@murfreesborotn.gov; Jami Averwater; Austin Maxwell; mscalesharris@murfreesbototn.gov; Shawn Wright; Kirt Wade
Subject: [EXTERNAL]- Murfreesboro should be a place of PRIDE
Date: Monday, November 7, 2022 10:37:54 AM

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Mr Mayor and members of the council,

Good morning to you all. My name is Chelsea Cooper and I have, until very recently, been a proud resident of Murfreesboro. While I am still very much a resident, my pride in our community is wavering in light of the decision to ban the Boro Pride festival after the report of city manager, Craig Tindall.

To be perfectly clear, I am a cis-gendered, heterosexual female married to a cis-gendered, heterosexual male, raising a (as far as we know at this time) cis-gendered, heterosexual male. Our son is 10 years old and a 4th grader at Salem Elementary School.

We are raising our son to be inclusive, anti-racist, and kind. Part of these lessons include attending and participating in local pride celebrations. This year we marched in the Nashville Pride parade, enjoyed the Nashville Pride festival, the Boro Pride festival, and SEVERAL Drag Shows in the area. Drag is an art form my son absolutely loves (and as a consequence of poor choices, he actually lost the privilege of attending a drag show, much to his disappointment).

Two of my proudest moments this year came when my son chose to wear his rainbow socks to school during pride month so that "everyone knows I support pride" and when he asked me to never quit my job so that we could march in the Pride parade every year.

Knowing that this body, driven by misinformation, fear, and quite frankly, hate, has banned such an important event makes me sad. It makes me disappointed. It makes me ashamed to be a resident of a city I once thought to be great, because of its commitment to diversity, inclusion, kindness, and love. None of those things are being shown to the LGBTQIA+ community at the moment and it's truly a stain on our city.

I think back to a few years ago when the Murfreesboro Loves campaign flooded our community after plans for a white nationalist rally on the square became public. I was never more proud of the way we embraced our differences - all religions, nationalities, creeds, races, genders - and came together to protect and commit to love over hate. The decision to ban Boro Pride absolutely Descartes the remains of that movement - it exudes the hate we once claimed to denounce outright.

As a governing body, by upholding this decision, you are putting the misguided views of a noisy few above the truth and the values of the majority of the people you claim to represent. You are using religion to drive a wedge between your citizens - when not all of your citizens espouse that particular religion's so-called values.

I urge you to reconsider this decision and welcome Boro Pride back with open arms and a heartfelt apology. Our community should be about love, acceptance, inclusion, kindness and PRIDE.

I am enclosing a few of my favorite images of my son at various pride celebrations this year as

well as a few of him with some FABULOUS drag queens. Because you need to see exactly what these events do to children - they elicit joy.

My contact information is below should you be interested in discussing this further.

With regards,

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