



University of Colorado

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Open Letter to the CU Regents From CU Faculty Council LGBTQ+ Committee

Mark Kennedy, and our Board of Regents, would like us to ignore Mr. Kennedy's LGBTQ+ voting record. We appreciate that he publicly stated he has since changed a number of his positions related to LGBTQ+ rights. However, we can't ignore the fact that LGBTQ+ people continue to face discrimination and harassment on a daily basis in large part because of actions like those taken by Mr. Kennedy. We ask that our Board of Regents not ignore this fact, either.

In 2002, recognizing that because same-sex partners could not legally marry and thus were denied the same health care benefits as other members of our community, CU's Board of Regents voted to begin offering health care benefits to same-sex partners because, as Regent Bob Sievers said, "Unless all of us are treated equally, none of us is treated equally." Meanwhile, in 2004 and 2006, Mark Kennedy was voting to enshrine discrimination in our nation's Constitution by voting to ban same-sex marriage and define marriage as between one man and one woman. CU has continued to show leadership in the University's treatment of LGBTQ+ members of the CU community, including the University's expansion of health insurance benefits to cover care for transgender employees and CU's position as the only university to sponsor Denver PrideFest—the largest LGBTQ+ pride festival in the Rocky Mountain Region. Mr. Kennedy has not shown the same level of leadership during his time in Congress or academia.

Our committee prides itself on its intersectional work, including co-hosting symposia with the Faculty Council Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee to provide our community with a forum for discussing how, as Dr. King asserted, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Therefore, we are also troubled by his apparent lack of support for Black and Latinx students, women, faculty members conducting particular types of medical research on our campuses, and DACA students. For example, during his interview at UCF, when asked whether or not he supports DACA students, Mr. Kennedy chose not to answer in the affirmative. Instead, he said that if an issue arose he would "sit in the chair as UCF President and act in the chair as UCF President, not as Mark Kennedyⁱ." In light of our own leaders' clear declarations of support for DACA studentsⁱⁱ we are quite disturbed by this admission. Just this morning, in an interview on CPR, when asked about his position on Affirmative Action Mr. Kennedy replied: "Can I not answer that question? You caught me off-guard." This, again, is not the response of someone who can lead on Diversity and Inclusion efforts.

In light of both his past and current record, we ask you to reconsider your support for Mark Kennedy.

Sincerely,

The LGBTQ+ Committee of Faculty Council, 2018-2019



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ⁱ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRWCGuQbAeA&feature=youtu.be> approximately 50 minute mark

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ucdenver.edu/about/WhoWeAre/Chancellor/CUDenver/ChancellorsCommunications/Pages/Statement%20on%20Immigration%20Executive%20Orders,-1-30-17.aspx>