

I am Chris Paulsen, Executive Director of Indiana Youth Group. We serve LGBTQ youth and their straight allies, ages 12-20.

When an incident of hate occurs, it is meant to bring fear to a targeted, marginalized group of people. I think the majority of us feel that or have felt that fear at some point. If we continue to live in fear, the perpetrators win.

We need to come together, take that fear, and work toward passing a hate crimes law in Indiana. A hate crimes law that is fully inclusive, including sexual orientation and gender identity. Because we are not fully protected until all marginalized groups are protected.

As we have seen the past couple of years, the work will not be easy. The conversations are difficult and the opposition is organized. However, together we can make Indiana one of 46 states that has a hate crimes law, not 1 of 5 that doesn't.

Our youth are watching us and deciding if Indiana is a safe and welcoming place to live as adults. Let all work together to show them that Indiana is that place.