



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 21, 2024**

**STATEMENT TO THE LGBT CAUCUS OF THE TENNESSEE DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

About seven years ago, a friend of mine asked me, and several others, to come to visit him and his wife in rural Maury County. He and I knew each other through our shared experience in LGBTQ activism. My friend, who is an out trans man, needed his chosen family to come help him and his family out while he recovered from an urgently needed surgery. I was honored to have been able to do this for him.

That visit also profoundly changed my own life. It opened the door for me to move back to Tennessee, the state where I was born and where my family has lived for seven generations. About four months later, I bought my first house in Columbia, with the help of my friend (who rented a room from me for the first year).

In the past seven years, my neighborhood has changed in many ways, both good and bad.

Since 2018, home prices have doubled. Younger families are now renting at prices that are so high that it is now difficult for them to achieve the dream of home ownership. Meanwhile, our state legislature and county commission in Maury County seem hell-bent on ignoring the economic needs of working families while attacking LGBTQ+ people as well as other historically-marginalized communities. Some of my friends have left Tennessee and others have told me they are considering leaving Tennessee.

But, at the same time, grassroots activists are making a difference. I was happy to have been a volunteer at the first Columbia Pride festival in 2021. I am encouraged – not just as a queer person, but as someone who values freedom and human dignity – by members of our community who have pushed back against attacks on our county library and public schools.

I am running for State Senator this year. I believe that not only because it is time for a change, but that **change is possible**. Tennessee needs to grow an economy for all; we must protect and improve our public schools and actually listen to our teachers and librarians; and we need safer and more-inclusive communities where every family is free to live and love without fear.

I hope to earn the votes of all our caucus members in District 28 (all of Maury, Marshall, Lewis, and Giles counties, and part of Williamson County). I also hope that caucus members in other parts of our state will support us as they are able.

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself.