

## Exhibit 12

### Declaration of Ulrike Carlson

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA**

GLBT YOUTH IN IOWA SCHOOLS TASK FORCE  
d/b/a/ IOWA SAFE SCHOOLS; P.B.-P., by his parent and  
next friend, BELINDA SCARROTT; P.C. and A.C., by  
their parents and next friends, RICHARD and ULRIKE  
CARLSON; T.S., by her parent and next friend, ERIC  
SAYLOR; B.F.S., by their parents and next friends,  
BRIGIT and JOSEPH STEVENS; ROBERT SMITH, by  
his parents and next friends JANE and JOHN SMITH;  
B.F., by their parent and next friend, LARA NEWSOM;  
JAMES DOE, by his parent and next friend, JOHN DOE,

*Plaintiffs,*

v.

KIM REYNOLDS, in her official capacity as Governor of  
the State of Iowa; MCKENZIE SNOW, in her official  
capacity as Director of the Department of Education;  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; IOWA  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; IOWA CITY  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT; MATT DEGNER,  
in his official capacity as Iowa City Community School  
District Superintendent; MOLLY ABRAHAM, J.P.  
CLAUSSEN, CHARLIE EASTHAM, JAYNE FINCH,  
RUTHINA MALONE, MAKI PILCHER HAYEK, and  
LISA WILLIAMS, in their official capacities as board  
members of the Iowa City Community School District;  
SIOUX CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT;  
ROD EARLEYWINE, in his official capacity as Sioux  
City Community School District Superintendent; DAN  
GREENWELL, JAN GEORGE, TAYLOR GOODVIN,  
BOB MICHAELSON, MONIQUE E. SCARLETT,  
PHILIP HAMMAN, and BERNIE SCOLARO, in their  
official capacities as board members of the Sioux City  
Community School District; URBANDALE  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT; ROSALIE DACA,  
in her official capacity as Urbandale Community School  
District Superintendent; KATHERINE HOWSARE,  
BRIANNA SAYRE GEISER, ASHLEY ANDERSON,  
DANIEL GUTMANN, RACHEL KENT, JENNY  
MEADE, JASON MENKE, JULIE MITCHELL, and

Case No. 4:23-cv-474

**DECLARATION OF  
ULRIKE CARLSON**

STEVE RICHMAN, in their official capacities as board members of the Urbandale Community School District; WATERLOO COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT; JARED SMITH, in his official capacity as Waterloo Community School District Superintendent; SUE FLYNN, JESSE KNIGHT, ASTOR WILLIAMS, LYLE SCHMITT, STACIE MILLS, JANELLE EWING, PAM ARNDORFER, and JEFF SOMMERFELDT, in their official capacities as board members of the Waterloo Community School District; WEST DES MOINES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS; MATT ADAMS, in his official capacity as West Des Moines Community Schools Superintendent; JEFF HICKS, LILA P. MONTOYA STARR, LIZ COX, LONNIE DAFNEY, FANNETTE ELLIOTT, JILL CATON JOHNSON, and ANADELIA MORGAN, in their official capacities as board members of the West Des Moines Community Schools District,

*Defendants.*

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COMES NOW, Ulrike Carlson and pursuant to 28 U.S.C §1746, declares under penalty of perjury that the following is true and correct:

1. My name is Ulrike Carlson. I am over 18 years old. I have personal knowledge of the facts as stated herein.
2. My husband, Richard Carlson, and I are the legal parents and next friends of our minor children, A.C. and P.C., ages 9 and 17 respectively, who are plaintiffs in this action.
3. I am a resident of Iowa City in Johnson County, Iowa, along with my husband and our children. I have lived in Iowa for 21 years.
4. A.C. is a girl in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Twain Elementary School in Iowa City. P.C is a non-binary student in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at Iowa City High School.
5. A.C. is transgender. At the age of 1.5 years, A.C. learned to say several color words and started demanding that all her clothes be “purple.” We honored her wishes at that point and

bought traditional boys' clothes in that color. A.C. also showed an interest in toys that are generally considered to be more typical for girls, such as dolls and sparkly crowns. At age three, A.C. started complaining and crying every morning before daycare when we were putting on clothes, at times fighting every part of her outfit. During those occasions, A.C. said (she spoke predominantly German in the home as a toddler): *Ich will aber ein Kind sein.* (But I want to be a child.) When we reassured A.C. that she indeed was a child, more tears and tantrums would follow. We later realized that she had mixed up the German words *Kind* (child) and *Mädchen* (girl). After several months of A.C. being very unhappy every morning, we permitted A.C. to choose her own Halloween costume at Costco. She picked a frilly, pink Minnie Mouse costume with white polka dots. At home she put it on and her whole demeanor changed, the previous sadness was gone. I asked her if that was what she meant with being a *Kind* and she repeatedly replied in the affirmative.

6. We began letting her wear dresses and skirts at home and for family outings occasionally, but not for school, as we weren't sure whether her daycare would be fully supportive. A change of daycare allowed us to let A.C. present fully as a girl. When she entered kindergarten, she did so fully presenting as a girl. Initially, she opted to use either they/them or she/her pronouns, but quickly amended that to using only she/her which she continues to use now.

7. A.C. she has never wavered in her conviction: she is a girl. She is fully accepted as such by her friends and enjoys playing with dolls, reading and playing video games. She has many friends, is well-liked by her peers and does very well in school.

8. Recently, A.C. has been very worried as some female classmates and friends are on the cusp of puberty. She desperately wishes for her body to undergo these changes, as well, and dreads any potential change towards a more masculine body. The possibility of not being seen as female by her peers, teachers and other adults leads to feelings of anxiety and sadness for her.

Recently, she has also been considering changing her name into something more traditionally female despite her past fondness for her first name, which is one that is traditionally male. While she experiences anxiety and depression due to those uncertainties in her life, A.C. is confident in who she is and we support her completely in being true to her identity.

9. P.C. is a 17-year-old student who currently uses all pronouns (he/she/they). P.C. attends Iowa City High School where they excel in all their subjects. P.C. is equally interested in natural sciences and language arts and is also a talented artist. They plan to study medical anthropology and computer science and currently hold a 3.96 GPA. Starting to fluently read chapter books at age 4, P.C. has always been a voracious reader of both fiction and non-fiction. They are currently working on an advanced research project for their AP research class that they are very dedicated to. P.C. was always a child who liked to question things and who did not like to be beholden to traditional gender expectations. P.C. might wear a dress one day and a three-piece suit the next. As P.C. got older, their non-binary identity solidified and culminated in adopting their chosen name, P.C. Throughout their time in school, P.C. has always been well-liked by their peers and has shown natural leadership abilities. We have always supported P.C. in being true to themselves and their identity.

10. After passage of SF 496, A.C.'s school removed all safe space stickers and LGBTQ+ pride flags from classrooms and other spaces. After this happened, A.C. was often reluctant to go to school. She expressed on numerous occasions that she felt unsafe or as if somebody was "watching her" because she was different. A.C. feels as if she is being singled out for being transgender. She talked to me recently about her worries about being disliked for who she is, but also affirmed her identity as a transgender girl. Previously, teachers were able to educate others about A.C.'s identity when necessary and books about gender identity were available in

classrooms and the library. Rare instances of questions from peers about A.C.'s gender were met with child-appropriate explanations regarding A.C.'s trans identity. In fact, back then, A.C. felt comfortable sharing the fact that she is trans with close friends in her classroom. Now she is unsure of what is safe and legal to say and so are her educators, creating a climate of distrust, worry, and fear that is not conducive to A.C.'s education or wellbeing.

11. During October of 2023, A.C. reported to me an instance of bullying where another student from her class told her that being trans was "stupid" and that that particular student did not like trans people. A.C.'s classroom teacher interfered, telling the offending students that such language was not permitted: according to A.C. she said "Oh no, we don't say that!" to the student. However, the teacher did not follow this reprimand up with any teaching on tolerance and gender identity, as would have happened in the past. When A.C. reported this to me, she expressed disappointment with the teacher's response and told me that she would have liked the student to be told more clearly that trans people should not be bullied. She fears that these incidents will become more frequent now that teachers cannot talk about gender identity in school.

12. Because of incidents such as this one, I am worried that the current state of the law creates a hostile environment for my child, who is already especially vulnerable as part of a minority. I am worried that similar incidents of bullying will increase now that teachers are unable to address the topic of gender identity. A.C.'s teachers are put in the impossible position to choose being supportive educators over compliance with the laws.

13. SF 496 has put considerable stress on the entire family as we constantly worry that A.C. may experience further harmful incidents in school without teachers being able to address the root cause. As a result, my husband and I talked to A.C. and asked her to not share her status

as a trans girl with any other peers and we have taken care to ensure that A.C. avoids wearing clothing that might reveal her biological sex.

14. A.C.'s school has started removing books that acknowledge the existence of LGBTQ+ people. This deprives A.C. of the ability to see herself reflected in any of the materials in her classrooms as she grows older. A.C. often acknowledges that access to books and other materials that include references to LGBTQ+ characters meant a lot to her.

15. When P.C. was younger, P.C. read *Melissa* by Alex Gino and found the book deeply comforting because the novel concerns a transgender fourth grader who finds the courage to tell others who she is. While the school district's removal list is not yet finalized, the mere idea that many books that were seminally important to P.C. might be removed from elementary school libraries now or in the future and might not be available to A.C. and other children at some point, creates a lot of stress and mental anguish for both children. I worry that the potential removal of books and the lack of access to books containing diverse characters and identities will lead to both of our children being singled out and mistreated for who they are. Access to books containing diverse characters is an extremely important factor in fostering the tolerance and acceptance that is needed to ensure that members of the LGBTQ+ minority can access education free of harm and without danger to their physical and mental wellbeing.

16. I do not want A.C. to internalize the message sent by this law that there is something wrong with her, that she should be silenced and erased from school entirely, and that it is wrong for her even to have access to materials that acknowledge that she is not alone in her identity.

17. A.C. understands that school is different this year as a result of SF 496 and other recently-enacted laws targeting transgender youth, and I can tell that she is hurt, stressed, and upset. As stated above, she is suddenly reluctant to go to school, a place she formerly loved and

could not wait to go to every morning. She is often sad and withdrawn, and has expressed fear, frustration and resignation, as well as worry about never fitting in. I am worried about the toll this is taking on A.C.'s ability to have a happy childhood.

18. The passage of SF 496 has also added considerable stress and worry to P.C.'s life. The idea of not feeling welcome at school anymore, the idea of losing access to books they might need for their classes (e.g. for their AP Research class or their English class) have negatively affected P.C.'s quality of life and stressed them out during a time when they should focus on preparing for college. Most importantly, P.C. is highly worried about the effect of the book ban and the "Don't Say Gay" legislation on their little sister. P.C. is very protective of their sister and they share a strong relationship. P.C. has expressed feelings of resignation and futility, as well as an extreme worry that their little sister might not be safe in school and in public anymore.



I swear under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Dated this 24th day of November, 2023, at Iowa City, Iowa.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ulrike Carlson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ulrike Carlson