Dear X:

“That all may be one” is the motto of the United Church of Canada, and we believe that this motto is appropriate to keep in mind when practicing politics. As a leader of a political party, I am writing to you to express my concern about wedge politics aimed at polarization— seeking to divide people into groups against something or more disturbing against an individual or a group by making them the “other”. I urge you to reject divisive approach and concentrate on a style of politics that addresses critical policy issues with respect and open debate.

As a member of an Affirming Church committed to inclusivity, I am deeply troubled by the use of transgender people as a wedge issue, often framed under the guise of parental rights, women’s safety in washrooms, or fairness in sports. This has been happening internationally, nationally and in some provinces. I ask you to reject this style of politics and support the transgender community.

Transgender Canadians are a vulnerable group and statements by politicians that seek to make them the “other” is deeply irresponsible and dangerous. A Statistics Canada/Canadia Centre for Justice and Community Safety study indicated transgender people are “more likely to have experienced violence since age 15, and also more likely to experience inappropriate behaviours in public, online and at work than cisgender Canadians.” A recent national survey of 2SLGBTQI+ people sponsored by the federal government’s 2SLGBTQI+ Secretariat indicated that transgender women and transgender men report being denied employment opportunities due to their gender identity at a higher rate than their cisgender peers. We need words and actions that lower risks to the transgender community.

I am concerned when politicians call for the delay or cessation of gender-affirming treatments for transyouth. Not only is this issue best left to medical professionals; it is particularly irresponsible, given vulnerability of this group. A study in the Canadian Medical Association Journal article (June 6, 2022), indicated that transgender adolescents are at a much higher risk of suicidal ideation and of ever having attempted suicide compared to cisgendered, heterosexual adolescents. However, the study noted that gender-affirming care has been shown to improve mental health among transgendered youth so much so that their rates of suicidal ideation were the similar to their cisgendered peers.

I hope that you will reject wedge politics and seek the common good in a respectful manner. I also request that you will stand against creating “others” amongst us, especially the trans community, supporting their right to a life lived safely without discrimination as their authentic selves.

Yours sincerely,