Openhouse, our staff and board of directors, abhor the current ruling by the California Third District Court of Appeals striking down a 2017 anti-discrimination law protecting LGBTQ elders, and making it legal for employees to misgender and deadname patients at long-term care facilities.

“This decision by the court flies in the face of California’s LGBTQ Long-term Care Facility Residents’ Bill of Rights, which became law in 2017 to prevent discrimination against LGBTQ+ seniors,” said Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, Executive Director of Openhouse, Northern California’s leading non-profit social service organization defending the rights and dignity of all LGBTQ+ seniors. “Eliminating this protection will harm vulnerable seniors and shield elder abusers in nursing facilities.”

Many seniors facing nursing home placement consider going back into the closet or even suicide, fearing the mistreatment and shaming that continues to occur in nursing facilities across California, according to Dr. Sullivan. Openhouse conducts professional training to help aging organizations, retirement homes and nursing care facilities comply with the bill of rights for residents of long-term care facilities.

“We strongly urge State Attorney General Rob Bonta not to remove the misgendering clause from the bill of rights,” said the Openhouse Executive Director. “The lives of hundreds of LGBTQ+ seniors depend on his decision and California’s respect for the dignity and care of all our elders.”

Activist and artist, Donna Personna on San Francisco Pride Stage, 2019 photo credit: Saul Bromberger