



Joint Statement on Campus Transphobia

Earlier today, a poster image containing a screenshot from the University of Iowa's YAF (Young Americans for Freedom) chapter group chat circulated on social media. The screenshot shows the current and recently re-elected chair of the University of Iowa College Republicans using transphobic slurs to describe a group of individuals. In later messages, YAF's vice chair advises against using terms that could be "construed" as slurs out of fear that the messages could be exposed to the broader public, emphasizing that he is looking to protect members from "unnecessary" slander.

As YAF, with the approval of the University of Iowa, prepares to host political commentator Matt Walsh for an event on our campus, these messages should serve as yet another reminder of the shameless and deceptive attacks that they, along with members of other conservative student organizations, have directed toward the transgender community. This semester, aside from Matt Walsh's *"What is a Woman?"* tour, YAF's schedule included events titled *"Debating the Transgender Movement"*, *"Women's Spaces in the Age of Transgenderism"*, and *"What Age Should be Allowed to Transition?"*. Events like these are deceptively marketed to argue the very existence of our transgender peers, but as we have seen today through the words of young conservative leaders on our campus, they serve a greater purpose of belittling the transgender community, fueling further hate that has serious real-life implications. The language found in the screenshot is not that of misguided, inquisitive students seeking to hear different arguments and perspectives, but that of close-minded bigots seeking to put down those who do them no harm. Events and comments that continue to incite violence against the transgender community must not be allowed to occur on our campus without consequences.

Our five student organizations call on the university to do what is right by suspending Iowa YAF from all further activities in accordance with Rule 9 of the Office of Student Accountability's *Rules for Student Organizations*, for endangering the health and safety of our transgender peers. We also ask the university to address and condemn the harmful transphobia that has become a far too common theme among right-wing circles on campus.

Enough is enough.

Signed,

**University Democrats at Iowa Executive Board
Young Democratic Socialists at Iowa Steering Committee
Ignite UI
Student Advocates for Planned Parenthood UI
Environmental Coalition at Iowa**