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The Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs Defends Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine and Denounces Transphobia in the Commonwealth

Harrisburg, PA – Today, on behalf of the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs, Executive Director Rafael Álvarez Febo issued the following statement:

“Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, Pennsylvanians have tremendously benefited from the steadfast leadership of Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine.

“Dr. Levine has provided critical information to keep us safe from this dangerous virus, while also making important decisions managing the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Dr. Levine is a respected physician with decades of experience in healthcare. The leadership of Dr. Levine and her staff has helped save countless lives during this unprecedented time. In addition to a wealth of knowledge and experience, Dr. Levine has also proven to be a calming presence on our screens with her daily press conferences.

“This leadership has been met with some of the most vile and toxic transphobia our Commission has seen in our commonwealth in recent years. Week after week, members of the LGBTQ community and thousands of Pennsylvanians have tuned in to be informed by our Health Secretary only to be assaulted by streams of comments and slurs aimed directly at Dr. Levine and indirectly at all transgender Pennsylvanians. Whether a member of the media is misgendering her or social media comments are lobbed her way, we admire how Dr. Levine has shown poise and the highest degree of professionalism.

“In times of crisis and pain, LGBTQ individuals are united in pushing back against transphobia of any kind. Members of the commission believe that the health and safety of Pennsylvanians should not be undermined due to these toxic and personal attacks.

“We will continue to support the leadership of Dr. Rachel Levine and the Pennsylvania Department of Health to help get us through these uncertain times.”

The Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs was formed in 2018 through an Executive Order from Governor Tom Wolf. The commission is comprised of 40 commissioners representing all areas of the commonwealth and LGBTQ communities. The mission of the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs is to advise the governor and state agencies regarding policies, programs, and legislation that impact LGBTQ communities and to serve as a resourceful intermediary between LGBTQ communities and state government.