

April 18, 2017



Dear Chairman Dodd & Chairman Graves,

As President and CEO of GLAAD, I lead our organization's work with a range of top-tier entertainment, news, and social media outlets to advocate for fair, accurate and inclusive stories of LGBTQ people and families. For over 30 years, GLAAD has leveraged LGBTQ media images to create acceptance and understanding for our community. As you know, what people see in film, on TV, and in the news plays a huge role in how they vote, who they hire, who they bully on a playground, and how they generally perceive others.

The film industry has a shockingly awful history when it comes to telling the stories of transgender people. For over 50 years, transgender characters have been used as fodder in films where they were either psychopathic killers, deviant freaks, or pathetic victims. In GLAAD's most recent report on the film industry, we counted just one transgender character in mainstream film in 2016 and that character existed simply to be laughed at and mocked. As television has moved forward with more multi-dimensional portrayals of transgender people in shows like *Orange Is the New Black*, *Transparent*, and *The Fosters*, film lags far behind.

A transgender teenager has never been included in a mainstream film, despite dozens of television shows that have depicted stories in one-off episodes or as regular characters.

The upcoming film *3 Generations*, distributed by The Weinstein Co. and starring Elle Fanning, Naomi Watts, and Susan Sarandon, will help undo some of the damage Hollywood has caused. Elle Fanning plays Ray, a teenage boy who is also transgender. The powerful family drama allows audiences to get to know Ray's mother and grandmother as they advocate for their trans child and grandchild. It's a touching story about what really makes a family, and one that will not only provide transgender boys like Ray a character they can finally relate to, but parents of transgender youth a look into a family that deals with issues similar to ones they face. All that differentiates the film from other PG-13 films is a few instances of strong language. The film does not include graphic violence, drug use, or nudity – it merely portrays a modern family. The Williams Institute at UCLA estimates that there are 150,000 transgender youth between the ages of 13 and 17 in the United States. These are families who deserve to have their story told in a way that's accessible to those most affected.

The Motion Picture Association of America should represent all Americans, including transgender youth. Your decision to give *3 Generations* a restrictive 'R' rating sends a dangerous message to this already marginalized community. TV Parental Guidelines for television series that include regular characters who are transgender young men including *The Fosters* and *Degrassi* are TV-14 and TV-PG, respectively.

Hollywood desperately needs to share stories of transgender youth that foster acceptance. A recent study by the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center found that 30 percent of transgender youth report a history of at least one suicide attempt, and nearly 42 percent report a history of self-injury.

A parent's unconditional love for their child is not a story that should be restricted. In fact, it is a story that could help parents and young people across this country and around the world.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about *3 Generations* and transgender images in mainstream film, and GLAAD implores you to reconsider your decision to restrict this important and powerful film.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Kate Ellis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sarah Kate Ellis
President & CEO of GLAAD