

ISSUE BRIEF

SOUNDING THE ALARM: A NATIONAL STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR LGBTQ+ AMERICANS



AN ALARMING AND UNPRECEDENTED SPIKE IN ANTI-LGBTQ+ LEGISLATION HAS CREATED A DANGEROUS AND UNTENABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR MILLIONS OF LGBTQ+ PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

Faced with increasing waves of hostility and violence, some families have had to upend their lives and flee their homes in search of safer communities. Others have made the painful decision to stay, rooted by family obligations or employment, knowing that doing so could have serious ramifications for the people they love.

It cannot be clearer: LGBTQ+ people across this country are living in a state of emergency.

On June 6, 2023, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) officially declared a state of emergency for LGBTQ+ people in the United States for the first time in its 40-year history.

LEGISLATIVE ATTACKS

Political extremists have weaponized statehouses to introduce and enact legislation targeting LGBTQ+ people across key areas of life. From healthcare to bathroom access to education, lawmakers considered over 570 bills designed to restrict the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. In many cases, they succeeded. More than 75 bills passed into law in 2023, endangering the health and well-being of every member of the LGBTQ+ community.

Looking to rile up the most extreme members of their base, these lawmakers advanced reckless disinformation campaigns against some of the most vulnerable among us. In 2023 alone, 21 states passed laws denying transgender and non-binary youth access to age-appropriate, gender-affirming care, overriding the recommendations of every credible medical organization.

A coordinated campaign led by well-funded and radical anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups infiltrated grade schools and public libraries, white-washing history, banning LGBTQ+-themed books, and forcing school staff to deadname and misgender transgender and non-binary students. In the new year, a diverse multitude of college students in Florida and Texas will rejoin a campus less focused on their safety, and more concerned with attacking diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The large-scale assault on the LGBTQ+ community also included efforts to ban drag performances and to outlaw transgender people from using bathrooms in publicly-owned spaces.

These legislative attacks have had dangerous consequences.

MULTIPLYING THREATS

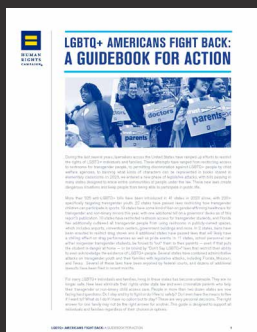
From coast to coast, the hostile legislative climate facing LGBTQ+ people triggered a surge in homophobic and transphobic rhetoric, discrimination, and violence.

Against the omnipresent backdrop of the tragedies carried out against the Pulse Nightclub and Club Q communities, Nazis and white supremacists attacked shop owners hanging pride flags, disrupted drag story hours and pride events, and spread harmful anti-LGBTQ+ tropes and hate speech online and in the streets. Opponents of equality directed bomb threats at schools, libraries, hospitals, and stores to scare allies and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Tragically still, the horrific epidemic of violence against transgender and gender nonconforming people continued – the overwhelming majority of whom were Black transgender women.

FIGHTING BACK TOGETHER

As opponents of equality work to stigmatize and dehumanize LGBTQ+ people, it is more important than ever for allies of the community to support and uplift the individuals who are most impacted by the proliferation of hate speech and discriminatory laws.

In navigating the current climate, an ongoing commitment to education and advocacy will be a critical tool in addressing anti-equality legislation and in centering the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people.



To ensure that LGBTQ+ people who live in or are planning to travel through hostile regions have all the resources they need to protect themselves and their families, we have provided an [LGBTQ+ Guidebook for Action](#). Among other things, the guidebook includes information on accessing healthcare, finding employment, information on filing civil rights complaints, and how to track legislative attacks.

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