



## Lesson 120

# The Destruction of Trans Rights

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The year 2023 has been one of the worst years for LGBTQ+ people in recent history. The far-right has made a huge effort to legalize discrimination against them wherever possible. In this lesson, we will look at a few of the areas where discrimination is prominent. We'll see how the law has been used to ban everything LGBTQ+ related, from books to healthcare.

## **Gender Reassignment**

### **What is gender affirming care?**

Some people are born with a body that doesn't match what they see themselves to be (their gender identity) - this includes transgender and gender nonconforming people. Some of these people experience what is called gender dysphoria, which is mental distress because of this dilemma. There are ways for them to get help, called gender affirming (health) care. Gender affirming therapy is one type of this, it "is a therapeutic stance that focuses on affirming a patient's gender identity and does not try to "repair" it" according to the American Psychiatric Association. There are also other options like gender affirming hormone therapy or surgery which is normally offered to adults. When children are in this situation they are usually given puberty blockers when they are old enough or maybe hormone treatment (youth and adults) to help. Not every transgender or gender nonconforming person uses all of these options, but they are aimed at making them feel better about themselves.

### **Gender affirming care at risk**

There have been a multitude of gender affirming healthcare bans put in place across the United States. On August 11, 2022, the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration added a rule stating that the Medicaid program does not cover gender reaffirming healthcare such as puberty blockers. The rule went into effect on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Utah have all passed some form of legislation that blocks minors from having access to gender-affirming care although in a few states the bans have been blocked due to legal reasons. Mississippi, Utah, South Dakota, Iowa, and Tennessee all passed those bills this year. On January 4, 2023, Oklahoma filed a bill that would ban anyone under the age of 26 from having access to gender affirming healthcare. The punishment for doctors failing to adhere could be a felony or having their medical license revoked. On March 22, 2023, Iowa passed a bill that "bans health care professionals from giving medical treatment 'for the purpose of attempting to alter the appearance of, or affirm the minor's perception of, the minor's gender or sex, if that appearance or perception is inconsistent with the minor's sex [at birth].' The legislation went to effect immediately after the governor's signing," "Iowa's governor signs law banning gender-affirming care for minors", CNN. Those are just some of the anti-LGBTQ+ legislation that has been passed.

# Gender Identity and Sports

## Transphobic legislation and sports

Many US states have been passing laws to discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community. Large amounts of the anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in the past few years have been aimed at trans people. Republicans have been passing laws that prevent trans youth from participating in sports that align with their gender identity, instead saying they have to play on teams that match their gender assigned at birth. Most of this legislation has targeted children/youth in K-12 grades, but some target college students. Idaho was the first state to enact one of these transgender sport bans-it was signed into Idaho law in March of 2020, but a federal judge later struck down the law. Once other states saw what was possible, they began signing transgender sport bans into their own state laws. In March of 2021 Mississippi and Arkansas banned trans people from playing in sports with their gender identity. The next month in April (2021) Alabama and Florida passed similar bans. In February of 2022 South Dakota passed a ban. The next month in March (2022) Iowa, Arizona, Utah, and Oklahoma all passed bans on trans people playing in sports. However, later that year in August, a Utah judge temporarily blocked the ban. Back in April of 2022 Kentucky and Tennessee passed bans on trans people in sports. In May 2022, South Carolina, Georgia, and Indiana enacted bans. A lawsuit against the ban in Indiana was holding it from becoming law, but the case was dropped in January of 2023. In September of 2022, a district court barred a Montana ban that was signed back in 2021 from being enforced. Then we get to state laws this year. In March, Wyoming enacted a transgender sport ban. In April, the US Supreme Court blocked a West Virginia 2021 ban from going into effect. But that doesn't mean April has been a good month, that's because also in April: Kansas, Missouri, and North Dakota all signed bans on transgender athletes into law. North Carolina's Congress is currently working on a ban, and it's likely to be made law soon. Overall 22 states have banned transgender athletes from playing on sports teams that align with their gender identity. Four of those states are facing troubles with their bans, and one state is yet to finalize its ban. We know there are still other states where Republicans would love to enact a ban, which means LGBTQ+ equality isn't going to come about anytime soon.

## **Biden's compromise**

Amid all of the debate around transgender youth, especially athletes, Biden proposed a solution - but like we know about Democrats, it was a compromise. Title IX is a US law that was passed in 1972, it is supposed to protect people in federally funded schools and colleges (among other institutions) from being discriminated against based on their gender. This law was expanded to include protections to LGBTQ+ students as well. On April 6<sup>th</sup>, Biden proposed a rule on the subject on transgender youth in sports - something that conservatives are strongly against because of their unfounded belief that transgender students would have an unfair advantage. Both conservatives and liberals (LGBTQ+ advocates) are unhappy with his proposal. Biden said that sweeping bans cannot be allowed because they would violate Title IX. Bans like this exist in around 20 states, and if this proposal is approved those bans would become void. But this proposal doesn't prohibit excluding trans athletes from sports. It still allows schools (especially high schools and colleges) to ban trans athletes under the pretense of fairness or safety. Of course trans rights activists don't like this; some believe that schools will just use this to ban more transgender athletes. People even recognize that Biden compromised on this rule. The Republicans in the House of Representatives used this opportunity and passed their own federal bill on transgender athletes. Last month, they banned all transgender girls/women from competing in girls'/women's sports at federally funded schools and colleges. Although this bill will not get anywhere thanks to the Democratic Senate and presidency, it still shows that they are bolder and more discriminatory than ever.

## A New School Curriculum?

### Don't say gay bill

On March 28, 2022, Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis signed what is known today as the "Don't Say Gay" bill. It was passed by the Florida House of Representatives on February 24<sup>th</sup> and the Senate on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Its official title is House Bill 1557: Parental Rights in Education, and took effect in July of the same year. "Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards," it says. This bill banned public school teachers from speaking about LGBTQ+ issues, such as sexual orientation and gender identity, in their classrooms. It would allow parents to sue the teachers should they speak about the issue. On April 19, 2023, the bill was expanded. Previously, the ban was up until the third grade. In April it was expanded to the 12th grade. In a survey done by the Williams Institute, more than half of the LGBTQ+ parents interviewed wanted to move out of the state of Florida because of the bill. There have been attempts by LGBTQ+ activist groups to get the law repealed but none of them have been successful.

### Books in schools

Banning books is another way the far-right has been bringing about inequality. The year 2023 has seen a record number of books being banned by Republicans. According to PEN America, in the 2022-23 school year, 874 different books have been banned across 37 states, with Florida, Texas, and Tennessee being the states to ban the most books. As we see transgender athletes and gender affirming healthcare being restricted across the country, it's no surprise that the main themes of books that are being banned deal with people of color, and more relevantly - LGBTQ+ subjects. Republicans target books in schools and libraries that seek to educate people about being part of the LGBTQ+ community. The most frequently banned books are titled *Gender Queer* and *Flamer* - both of which focus on being queer and gender identity. With only half of 2023 gone, we are likely to see more book bans similar to this in the coming months.

## **More school restrictions**

Several states have enacted bans that change what children learn in schools. Many conservative state legislatures and governors have prohibited, in some way, teaching children about gender identity and sexual orientation. These bans are harmful because children can grow up not even knowing about the experiences of many individuals, or children, who are LGBTQ+, might not get to learn about what they are experiencing. Bans exist in several states. A lot of these states have followed Florida's example, including Louisiana where a bill was introduced which would prohibit teaching or even discussing gender identity and sexual orientation at school. In Kansas, the state House and Senate approved a bill that would allow parents to take their children out of lessons and activities that go against their beliefs; while the bill is a little broad on the subjects that count, LGBTQ+ topics are certainly included. There are several other bills that affect trans and gender nonconforming youth that are going around in the United States: mandating which bathrooms they can use, not requiring staff to use the pronouns/name the student prefers be used to address them, and even requiring staff to alert the parents of a trans or gender nonconforming student (when the student might not want that) of their child's identity. At least two of these laws that were introduced this year have been passed already, and many more are still being considered.

## **LGBTQ+ Rights Around the World**

### **Anti-LGBTQ+ laws in other countries**

The United States is not the only country that is passing anti-LGBTQ+ bills. On March 21, 2023, Uganda passed a bill that would make homosexuality punishable by death. It says, "A person who commits the offence of aggravated homosexuality and is liable, on conviction to suffer death." The bill also states that promoting homosexuality is punishable by 20 years in prison. 387 out of 389 legislators voted in favor of the bill. Uganda isn't the only country that has passed anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Many countries in Africa have some form of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in place. For example, in Sudan, same sex relations are outlawed. The first two offenses are punishable with five years in prison while the third is punishable with life. A similar law is in place in Pakistan with the punishment being life in prison or 2-10 years and a fine. In Iran, the punishment for homosexuality ranges from 31 lashes to death.

## In summary:

### Gender Reassignment Bans

Gender affirming care is a way that affirms a patient's gender identity rather than repairing it.

In Florida, Medicaid no longer covers gender affirming healthcare. In Oklahoma, no one under the age of 26 can have access to gender affirming healthcare.

### Gender Identity and Sports

In March 2021, Mississippi and Arkansas banned transgender athletes. In April, Alabama and Florida pass similar bills. 22 states have banned transgender athletes.

Biden presented a compromised bill that wouldn't even solve the trans people in sports issue.

### A New School Curriculum?

On March 28, 2022, Gov. DeSantis passed a law that said LGBTQ+ issues cannot be taught in classrooms.

Many books have been banned due to their inclusion, allusion of homosexuality.

Many LGBTQ+ children will grow up in school not getting the basics of homosexuality and the LGBTQ+ community.

## LGBTQ+ Rights Around the World

In Uganda and other countries, homosexuality is a crime and is punishable by death, imprisonment, lashes, and/or fines.

Official Youth Prophecy Group website:

[youthprophecygroup.org](https://youthprophecygroup.org)

If you have any questions or comments on any of the material contact us at:

[youthprophecygroup@gmail.com](mailto:youthprophecygroup@gmail.com)

Find all the YPG lesson videos at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQRL-o2XOq\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQRL-o2XOq_g)

Link to YPG Zoom meetings which are at 10:00am Pacific Time on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays of the month:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170293849>