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Alberta Bill 9: Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

The Removal of Charter Rights and Freedoms for Transgender Albertans

Fort McMurray, Alberta - In Canada, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the foundational document in the Constitution that protects the rights and freedoms of all Canadians. The Charter has been the cornerstone in legal challenges to advance the equality rights of women, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and religious freedom. Yesterday, the Alberta Government introduced and passed the first reading of Bill 9, using the Notwithstanding Clause to strip the rights of gender diverse youth and end the legal challenges against Bills 26, 27 and 29. In doing so, the Government of Alberta acknowledges that these pieces of legislation violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is singularly the broadest attack on 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in Canadian history. Instead of participating in a legal and democratic system, the Alberta Government has chosen to remove the basic human rights of transgender Albertans for five years. In a province that claims to be the "most free," the government continues to roll back the freedoms of the most vulnerable communities.

Bill 26 - which bans gender affirming care for gender diverse youth under the age of 16 - was temporarily blocked with an injunction on June 27, 2025, with the court basing its decision on expert evidence that the legislation would cause "irreparable harm" by reinforcing existing discrimination and prejudice faced by gender-diverse youth. The government is expected to force Bill 9 through the legislature by tomorrow, which will immediately end the injunction and legal challenge. Bill 27 - which forces teachers to out gender diverse students who want to change their name or pronouns at school - has been in effect since September 1st, 2025. A legal challenge has been filed against Bill 27 on the grounds that it violates the Charter Rights of gender diverse youth, however Bill 9 would end that challenge before it can even be seen by the courts. Bill 29 - which bans transgender women from participating in women's sports (including house leagues and non-competitive leagues) - does not have any legal challenges filed at this time. The government is invoking Bill 9 pre-emptively, stripping away the rights of transgender women before they even have a chance to challenge the egregious law.

Bill 9 is the continuation of this government wasting time, money and resources targeting a small, marginalized group to distract from real issues affecting our province. The original bills are based on misinformation and were unnecessary to begin with. Bill 26 bans gender affirming surgery on those under 18. Gender affirming "bottom" surgery was already exclusively performed on those over 18; gender affirming chest surgery can only be performed if the patient is fully developed. The bill goes further banning gender affirming care like puberty blockers from

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those under the age of 16. Puberty blockers are designed to pause activity in the pituitary gland during puberty to give youth more time and do not have any permanent or lasting side effects. When a youth comes off of puberty blockers, the pituitary gland resumes activity, meaning this medication entirely reversible. Puberty blockers are most effective prior to age 14, as once puberty begins, the developmental changes of puberty are not reversible. These standards of care are developed and monitored by medical professionals, who are the appropriate professionals to guide the medical decisions of young people and their families, not the government. Though the government claims that these bills are about protecting parental rights, Bill 26 strips parents from their rights to support their trans children.

Bill 27 legislates teachers and school staff to forcibly "out" students. There is a common misconception that opposition to this legislation is meant to exclude or undermine parents, but in fact we encourage a strong family support network and encourage youth to come out to their families when they are ready and safe to do so. Studies show that by having just one accepting adult in their lives, 2SLGBTQ+ youth were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt[1], and risk of suicide decreases 93% with strong family support.[2] Unfortunately, family support networks are not enough and not every young person has a supportive family to share their identity with - 2SLGBTQ+ youth require and deserve supportive schools, families, and communities as pillars of well-being. In a scoping review of research on protective factors for LGBTI+ youth well-being, in addition to supportive family and friends, community connectedness and inclusive, safe school environments have been shown to play a significant role in their positive mental health.[3] Young people deserve the autonomy to come out to their families when they are ready to do so, and have the right to a safe and caring school environment where their well-being is protected.

Bill 29, the Fairness and Safety in Sport Act, bans transgender women and girls from participating in women's sports leagues, including house leagues and recreational leagues. This bill was introduced under the guise of making sports fair, yet it only creates restrictions around participation in girls and women's sports leagues. In reality, there are no trans women in the province competing in sport at a professional level. Therefore, this bill specifically targets transgender women's ability to participate in recreational sports. Studies show that access to recreation leads to improved mental health outcomes.[4] Contrary to misinformation surrounding transgender athletes, a 2023 report commissioned by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, clarified that there is no evidence trans women athletes have any biological advantage after 12 months of testosterone suppression.[5]

The Government chose to name Bill 9: the Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment, to create greater division and further promote misinformation to the public. Experts and data all agree that gender affirming care saves lives, forced outing causes harm, and access to sport and recreation is fundamental for healthy bodies and minds. This bill is not about protecting Alberta's children, it is taking away the rights and protections of our most vulnerable youth. National data on 2SLGTBQ+ youth in Canada shows that 25% of 2SLGBTQ+ youth had experienced suicidal ideation in the past year (compared with 5% of cisgender heterosexual

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youth) and that 2SLGBTQ+ youth were at elevated risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, compared with their cisgender heterosexual peers[6]. Studies also show that regions where anti-trans legislation are introduced show an increase up to 72% in suicide attempts.[7] Since these initial bills were announced in 2024, two transgender youth have died by suicide in our region, despite having supportive families.

It is particularly painful and disrespectful that the government has chosen to strip the basic human rights of transgender Albertans during Transgender Awareness Week; with Bill 9 expected to pass tomorrow on Transgender Day of Remembrance. While we as a community are gathering to mourn and to remember our loved ones, the government is in the legislature eroding our rights, causing further harm and division. The cruelty of this government knows no bounds.

Call to Action:

- **Donate** to our crowdfunding campaign to provide Gender Affirming Gear to local transgender folks. The Alberta government matches 50% of donations received; every donation cuts deeper in their pockets.
- **Join us** at our Transgender Day of Remembrance Potluck and Memorial on November 20th from 6-8pm at the Redpoll Centre. Come show your support for the trans community and help us remember and honour the lives of those we have lost. Before the event we will be having a letter writing workshop from 4-6pm to encourage community members to send letters to their MLA.
- **Write** to your MLA and tell them that you are against the use of the notwithstanding clause and erosion of human rights in our province.
- **Sign** the petition from Queer Momentum, telling the Alberta government to stop these radical infringements on human rights.
- **Share** this statement, the petition, and information from trusted sources with your networks. There is no longer time for benevolence, it is time to act!
- **Support** those in your life that are directly impacted by this legislation. Check in on your transgender friends, and family and offer your support.

About Wood Buffalo Pride:
We advocate for and empower 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and families in Wood Buffalo by fostering inclusion, providing education, and creating safe spaces that support equity, belonging, health, and well-being.

[1]The Trevor Project, Research Brief: Accepting Adults Reduce Suicide Attempts Among LGBTQ Youth. 2019 June. Retrieved from The Trevor Project.

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[3]Ceatha N, Koay ACC, Buggy C, James O, Tully L, Bustillo M, Crowley D. Protective Factors for LGBTI+ Youth Wellbeing: A Scoping Review Underpinned by Recognition Theory. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2021 Nov 7;18(21):11682. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182111682. PMID: 34770199; PMCID: PMC8583439.

[4]Eather, N., Wade, L., Pankowiak, A. et al. The impact of sports participation on mental health and social outcomes in adults: a systematic review and the 'Mental Health through Sport' conceptual model. Syst Rev 12, 102 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-023-02264-8

[5]Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. "Literature Review Does Not Support Bans on Transgender Women Athletes." *CCES*, 3 Nov. 2022, cces.ca/news/literature-review-does-not-support-bans-transgender-women-athletes.

[6]Kingsbury M, Findlay L. Mental health and access to support among 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Health Rep. 2024 Nov 20;35(11):12-22. doi: 10.25318/82-003-x202401100002-eng. PMID: 39570814.

[7] Lee, W.Y., Hobbs, J.N., Hobaica, S. et al. State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA. Nat Hum Behav 8, 2096–2106 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-01979-5