

# **WE MUST FIGHT IN SOLIDARITY WITH TRANS YOUTH**

**Drawing the Connections  
Between Our Movements**

**June 2022**

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# CONTEXT

An organized, multi-million dollar effort by a persistent, coordinated network of right-wing Christian groups, white supremacist think tanks, organizations and billionaires was responsible for a [record 147 anti-trans bills](#)<sup>1</sup> being introduced across the US in 2021, of which 13 became law. As of June 1, 2022, two laws criminalizing the provision of gender-affirming health care for trans youth have passed—even though gender-affirming care is the standard of care recommended by every major medical and nursing association as essential and evidence-based. Preventing young people from accessing such care endangers them, undermines their bodily autonomy, and is a blatant violation of medical ethical and professional standards.

As Chase Strangio from the ACLU points out “what we are seeing nationally is an effort to leverage and weaponize misinformation particularly about trans people to mobilize a political base in the lead-up to 2022 and 2024.”<sup>2</sup> We are witnessing growing attempts to push trans community members out of the public sphere, criminalize their very existence, and target the health care providers and family members who support them, making their survival harder.

These laws create further opportunities for criminalization of trans people and parents of trans youth when accessing medical care, and are thus critical points of resistance for movements to end policing and criminalization, and for reproductive and gender justice.

This brief makes the case that it is imperative for us to fight for conditions that enable trans people to live full, dignified and thriving lives, and offers ideas on how we can collectively push back across our movements. Conceding ground to attacks on trans people expands opportunities for increased surveillance, policing, and criminalization across the board, and the acceleration of white supremacist agendas. This fight belongs to all of us.

In April 2021, Arkansas passed the first law banning gender-affirming health care for transgender youth, threatening providers with discipline by the “appropriate licensing entity or disciplinary review board” for providing such care. The law also threatens providers with civil lawsuits if they even offer a referral to a trans young person to seek care out of state. [The law was temporarily blocked by a federal judge](#)<sup>3</sup> in response to a legal challenge by the ACLU, but trans adolescents and their families wait anxiously for the outcome of the trial set for July 2022.

In April 2022, Alabama became the first state to make it a felony for professionals to provide access to gender-affirming care for anyone under the age of 19. Families fought back, and on May 13, a [federal judge blocked part of the law](#)<sup>4</sup> that made it a felony to prescribe gender-affirming medication. Meanwhile, in Texas, a fight continues over a directive by the Republican Governor Greg Abbott mandating state welfare officials to launch child abuse investigations against parents who seek gender-affirming care for their trans children. The directive was blocked, but not before investigations had been opened, providers had shut down services, and considerable harm was caused.

On April 20, 2022, the [Florida Department of Health issued guidance to providers](#)<sup>5</sup> across the state ordering them to not only cease the provision of hormone therapy, but to also cease support for social transition (dressing in clothes that match your gender, wearing your hair as you like, going by the pronouns you want, etc.) as well; effectively banning any form of support for trans youth being themselves in any way.

# HISTORY

Current conditions are no coincidence. They are the result of a relentless, decades-long push by far-right Christian groups, white supremacist and white ethnonationalist groups, and affiliated billionaires and foundations whose response to the declining US white birth rate and changing demographics has been to militarize the border, incarcerate Black, Indigenous and people of color in ever-increasing numbers, erode tribal sovereignty and aggressively enforce gender binaries, enact abortion bans, and target queer and trans people because they threaten to disrupt normative family structures, white voting majorities, and capitalist economic interests.

Political dynasties like the extreme right [DeVos-Prince clan](#)<sup>6</sup> and their related foundations have been pushing anti-LGBTQ efforts since the Reagan administration. While some of the formations might be new, the tactics of criminalizing, and separating families, and breaking up kinship networks have age-old roots—in the enslavement of Black people, and the apprenticeships that would separate their families even post-emancipation; in the wars of colonization of Turtle Island, in which the US military used child removal as a weapon of war; and in the removal of Indigenous children from their parents into often lethal boarding schools. This past echoes in the ongoing separation of Black, Indigenous and migrant children from their families, and politicians disingenuously using child abuse laws to separate trans youth from supportive families, building on racist legacies and the existing carceral apparatus of the state.

There is also a [long history of law enforcement agents targeting trans community members](#),<sup>7</sup> using “anti cross-dressing” and prostitution laws, legacies of European colonialism; and other flimsy pretexts to police, arrest and brutalize queer, trans and gender-expansive people—from the Stonewall riots in 1969 to the violent raid on the Power Plant club in Highland Park, Detroit, in 2003, to laws criminalizing “lewd conduct” and “loitering for the purposes of prostitution.”<sup>8</sup>

The criminalization of trans people seeking access to health care is also not new, although in the past it has focused primarily on criminalizing self-managed or community-managed care, and primarily when provided and accessed by Black trans women and nonbinary people, and trans people in the sex trades or who use criminalized substances. For example, Black transgender women have been criminalized and [incarcerated for providing silicone injections](#)<sup>9</sup> to themselves and others, and Black trans and nonbinary people have also been arrested for carrying syringes or hormones.

## OLD FIGHTS, NEW BATTLEFIELDS

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The panic drummed up by the evangelical Right and the intensified focus on trans young people is a backlash to the enactment of certain legal protections for LGBTQ+ people and growing consciousness around and acceptance of the broad spectrum of gender identity, especially among young people.

Fewer than 10 anti-trans bills were introduced in 2019. Several attempts to legislate around use of sex-segregated facilities—known as “bathroom panic” bills—in 2016 failed because of mobilizations pushing back. The Right [tested, polled and conducted focus groups to determine in which states Americans were most uncomfortable with trans people](#),<sup>10</sup> where they had the weakest support, and were most vulnerable and ratcheted up their political fights in those states. While bills started with policing trans children in school sports, they are now pushing the envelope further and into their own homes and private lives, interfering with their ability to get life-saving medical care and affirming support from their families.

While youth-focused laws serve as an opening to mobilize the Right’s base around transphobic ideas about “protecting our children” (all while launching [eliminationist](#) campaigns), there is no doubt that this is a Trojan horse to enact laws criminalizing gender-affirming care for transgender adults, to compromise the patient-provider relationship and confidentiality, to decrease privacy, increase surveillance, and to enact more laws criminalizing the bodily autonomy of Black, Indigenous, migrant, disabled, queer, and trans people, people surviving economic violence, and young people. It will not stop here.

# A WIDENING NET

## WHO BENEFITS FROM INCREASED CRIMINALIZATION? WHO IS IMPACTED?

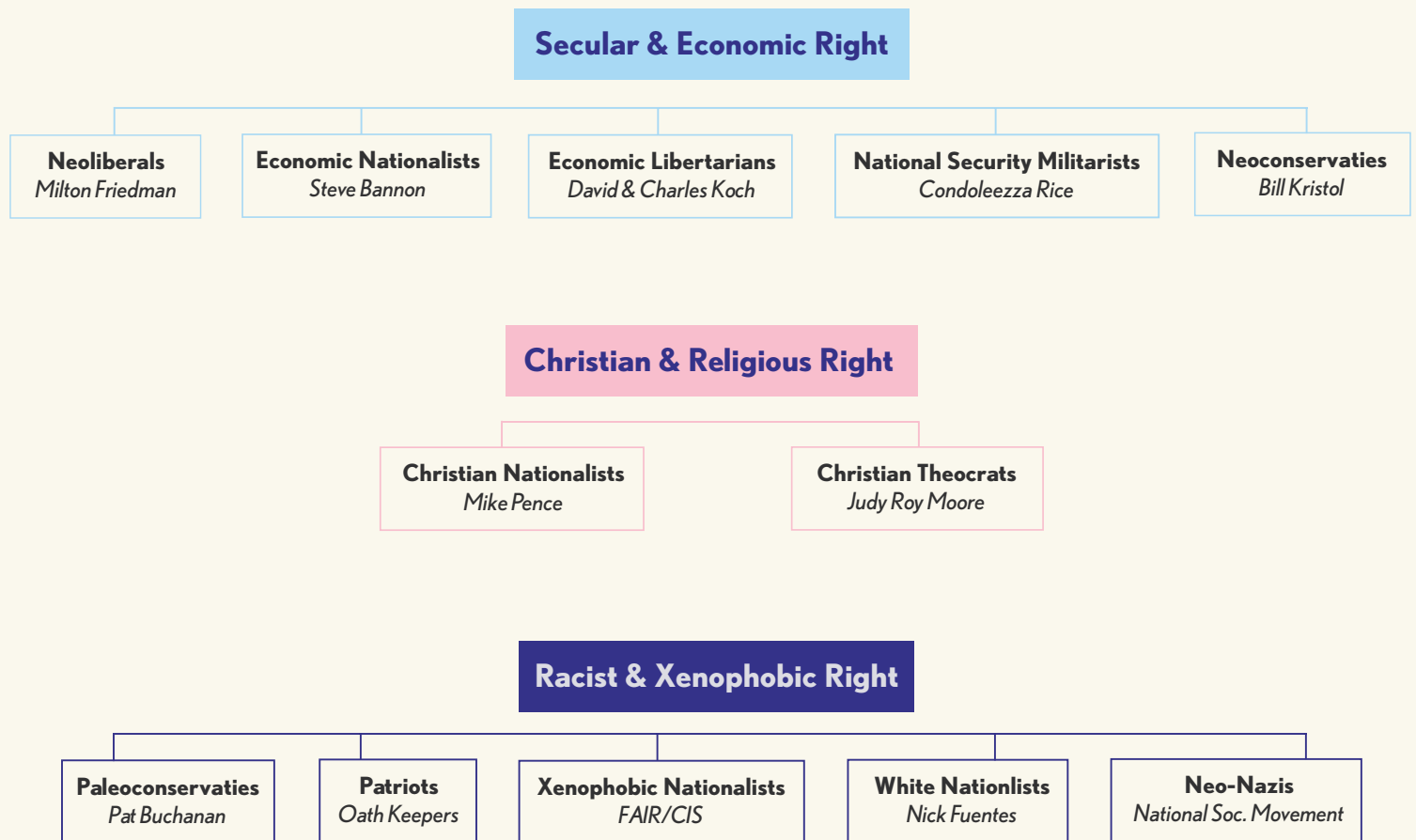
### LAWS THAT CRIMINALIZE TRANS PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM LEAD TO:

- Increased modes of surveillance for future targeting of vulnerable groups
  - » Much like the anti-abortion bill in Texas, SB8 required the gathering of names of those who had abortions after 6 weeks, Governor Abbott has also signaled a goal of getting data sets on trans kids in his directive to child “welfare” agencies.
  - » We know that law enforcement surveillance also means surveillance for the range of other forms of criminalized survival including irregular migration, substance use, trading sex, and selling medications or other state benefits.
- The continued deputizing of healthcare providers and other “helping professionals” to police people and limit their bodily autonomy as provided for by the Texas abortion ban, [SB8](#).<sup>11</sup>
- Innovations in tools of repression such as family policing/mandated reporting in Texas; felony charges in Idaho, Alabama; professional discipline and licensing threats in Arkansas.
- Increasingly hostile environments fueled by anti-trans rhetoric which leads to more violence and assaults against trans people, and possible incidents of [stochastic terrorism](#) (i.e. the incitement of a violent act through public demonization of a group or individual.)
- Administrative barriers like limiting access to appropriate identity documents which leads to denial of and/or reduced access to essential health care, public services, and private spaces. Many states still require surgery to update sex on birth certificate (and a few driver’s license).
- Not having ID which aligns with gender identity also leads to horrific abuses within jails and prisons when [the state incarcerates trans women in men’s facilities](#).<sup>12</sup>

# WHO IS FUELING THESE BILLS?

## WHY DO THEY HAVE A TRANS ELIMINATIONIST AGENDA?

### Sectors of the U.S. Right Wing & Sub-Movements



**Source: Political Research Associates ([politicalresearch.org](http://politicalresearch.org))**

*A nexus of politicians, right wing Christian and white supremacist, ethno-nationalist groups, cops and family policing agents enforce racialized, gendered and cisheteronormative hierarchies through state-sanctioned and extralegal violence.*



For extreme right groups, this is an absolutely central fight. As Political Research Associates map out (see image), anti-trans, anti-abortion, voter suppression and “anti-critical race theory” legislation is being pushed by an alliance of the secular and economic right, the Christian right, and the racist and xenophobic right, as a means to agitate their base, and expand their power.

There is a [steady cast of recurring characters and organizations](#)<sup>13</sup> with homophobic, transphobic and white supremacist agendas—like the Family Research Council, the Heritage Foundation, Family Policy Alliance, American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the Council for National Policy, Focus on the Family, and Alliance Defending Freedom—who are behind this fight, and they continue to recruit more people like “[gender-critical](#)” feminists, or [trans-exclusionary radical feminists \(TERFs\)](#) into their fundamentalist agenda, spending mountains of money to [infiltrate and fracture the LGBTQ movement](#).<sup>14</sup>

Under the Trump administration, these groups accrued even greater political and economic power, and used anti-trans rhetoric by mainstream politicians to push more harmful discourse and demands, laying the groundwork for future anti-trans legislation. At the beginning of 2021, these organizations, along with several others, came together to form an umbrella organization called Promise to America’s Children. A founding principle of Promise to America’s Children is to push trans kids out of the public sphere, and they have been relentless and methodical in this mission as can be seen through their [anti-trans legislation generator](#)<sup>15</sup> from which policy makers can copy and paste model bill language. Anti-trans messaging has become pivotal to far-right tactics as evidenced by the inclusion of Abigail Shrier in the Values Voter Summit, which lays the ground strategy for the far-right every year. [Shrier’s performatively panic-stricken anti-trans writing](#)<sup>16</sup> in the Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, and other publications has helped push, into the mainstream, views rejected by all major medical associations and their ethics committees.

## SITUATING CRIMINALIZATION OF GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE WITHIN A LARGER WEB:

# WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Anti-trans legislation fuels anti-feminist, ableist, anti-Black, xenophobic, white supremacist agendas. Laws that criminalize one marginalized population are inevitably deployed against other groups that are vulnerable to state violence. Additionally, criminalization is a strategy to disenfranchise entire swathes of the population. Coupled with large-scale voter suppression, such laws are designed to maintain white minority rule through criminalization, incarceration, deportation, expulsion and elimination.

### TRANS JUSTICE AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

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The fight for trans and reproductive justice are fights for bodily autonomy, gender justice, and self-determination—the very things that challenge and undermine the power structures and institutions that extreme right groups need. The playbook that the right wing draws from to attack these movements are one and the same. In fact, it is often the same organizations and people who are pushing both anti-trans and anti-abortion laws. For example, an Idaho State House bill, that would criminalize gender-affirming health care for trans children and teens, make it a felony punishable with life in prison for a doctor who provides gender-affirming care including surgeries and hormone treatments; and also make it a felony to take trans youth out of the state to receive that care elsewhere, mirrors the attempts of Missouri Republicans who tried to amend a bill, about prescription drug prices, to [prevent pregnant people from leaving the state](#)<sup>17</sup> for abortion care elsewhere in the country.

In the more extreme corners of the anti-trans movement, the links and accusations are even more strident—Alix Aharon, the “GenderMapper” organizer who documents the numbers of gender clinics, surgical clinics, and records evidence in order to “abolish the gender industry, and advocate for an end to the experimental intervention being performed on children across the World” has called Planned Parenthood the “apex of the trans lobby.”

It’s critical to note here that there is so much that is woven together legally, and when one set of protections and rights gets undone, it undoes a lot of interwoven protections. The right to personal privacy from government intrusion is undergirded by the Supreme Court’s opinion in *Roe v. Wade*. Once overturned, there would be more of a legal basis to strike down a host of other personal liberties that also rely on the right to privacy that *Roe v. Wade* upholds. As trans journalist [Katelyn Burns](#) says “If the government can tell you what to do with your uterus, it certainly can tell you what to do with your marriage choices, or even in the privacy of your own bedroom, and it certainly has the right to tell you what to do about gender transition—whether or not you have the right to do that, and I don’t think the courts are going to be a refuge on any of this.”<sup>18</sup>

State anti-abortion and anti-trans laws represent dual tracks under a single agenda that dictates the terms of how to have and raise children. Such laws are designed to enforce patriarchal and racist gender roles, which are reinforced through forms of institutionalized patriarchy, racism and ableism operating through hospitals, schools, and social service agencies. These tactics force unwanted pregnancy or sterilization, depending on who it is targeted at, and also seek to define what constitutes legitimate personhood.

In many states, our opponents have passed abortion bans in tandem with trans health bans. One of their goals—and one they are making a lot of progress toward achieving—is making sure that trans people assigned female at birth will maintain their capacity for pregnancy and will not be able to get an abortion if they do become pregnant.

Such **pronatalist** (i.e. policies and practices that push for higher birth rates) efforts are also a part of a white supremacist, classist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant agenda as detailed on the next page.

## TRANSPHOBIA AND THE FAR-RIGHT, WHITE SUPREMACY, AND WHITE NATIONALISM

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Trans young people with supportive parents and providers are often imagined as white, abled, middle class, US citizens, so anti-abortion measures are partly about increasing birth rates for people from those groups. But, in reality, they hit communities of color, immigrant communities, disabled communities, and poor and working-class communities the hardest. That's because trans young people and supportive parents from these communities already face barriers to health care and state-created vulnerability to criminalization, child removal, and early death. They are also least likely to be able to evade the laws to get access to care without risking arrest or child removal. So these efforts are also a part of a larger agenda to use reproductive politics to control, divide, marginalize and kill Black, Indigenous, other people of color, immigrant, disabled, and poor and working-class people.

Simultaneously there are [deliberate attempts to infiltrate and fracture the LGBTQ movement](#),<sup>19</sup> destroy feminism from within, and recruit more numbers to a pronatalist, [white nationalist](#) position. As [Jude Ellison S. Doyle reports](#)

A 2020 article from Radix Journal, a far-right publication founded by the neo-Nazi Richard Spencer, lays out a strategy for doing just that. In the article, entitled "The TERF to Dissident Right Pipeline," author Kat S. notes that TERFs' insistence on "biological sex" as an immutable binary—all "men" depraved and violent, all "women" fragile victims—may make it easier to convince them of other biological hierarchies. Their insistence on seeing trans women as "violent men," in particular, can be weaponized against men of colour and turned into overt [white supremacy](#). "It doesn't take any thinking woman long to see exactly which men are committing violent crime and the majority of partner violence, and race realism is a natural next step."<sup>20</sup>

In this context, [transition care is presented as an attack on white fertility and white birth rates](#).<sup>21</sup> Such rhetoric is aligned with the **“Great Replacement” theory** of white nationalists, a conspiracy theory that holds that nonwhite immigrants are demographically “replacing” whites throughout the West. These deadly talking points have been so viciously peddled by right-wing politicians and media that a large national poll conducted in May 2022 indicated that nearly half of Republicans and nearly [1 in 3 Americans](#) believe<sup>22</sup> in this conspiracy, including the [Buffalo shooter](#)<sup>23</sup> who drove hours in order to massacre 13 people in a low-income Black neighborhood, as they shopped for groceries on May 14, 2022. Anti-trans and white nationalist agendas also converge in Abigail Shrier’s most recent book, released in 2020, through the hardline conservative publisher Regnery which routinely releases white ethno-nationalist screeds by people like Richard Spencer, Michelle Malkin, and Ann Coulter. Shrier’s book, *Irreversible Damage: the transgender craze seducing our daughters*, portrays youth transition as an imminent threat to the fertility of “our daughters,” and infamously uses a not-so-subtle cover illustration of a young white girl with [a gaping hole in place of her uterus](#).<sup>24</sup>



**Nearly 1 in 3 Americans believe in the “Great Replacement” theory.**



## TRANS JUSTICE AND DISABILITY JUSTICE

The talking points and arguments in favor of these restrictive policies lean heavily on ableism. They assert that most or all trans and nonbinary people, and especially when assigned female at birth, have an “underlying condition” such as autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, ADHD, or depression that causes our gender dysphoria. They argue that people with these types of mental disabilities should not be trusted about who we are or permitted to make our own decisions about our bodies, medical treatment, or identities. These arguments are also not new, and are part of a long history of using the medical and social work professions to pathologize, marginalize, and remove people from society.<sup>25 26</sup> It is profoundly dangerous for all neurodivergent and disabled people, who so often [have our bodily autonomy taken away](#),<sup>27</sup> including in medical settings. They are especially demeaning and dangerous for neurodivergent and disabled trans and nonbinary people. In the way that ableism requires a false view of a worthy and legitimate life, these arguments also require a false view of sex as binary, which is particularly dangerous for intersex people who are pathologized and often forced to undergo surgeries without consent to “correct” the fact that their biology [does not fit neatly into that binary](#).<sup>28</sup>

[Studies have demonstrated](#)<sup>29</sup> that 82% of transgender folks experience suicidal ideation, and 40% make a suicide attempt in their lifetime—the rates are higher for trans teens. Creating non-discriminatory, supportive environments and facilitating access to gender-affirming care is a moral imperative, and something we can all work towards. In 2018, a [University of Texas at Austin study](#)<sup>30</sup> found that trans youth who were able to simply go by their chosen or affirmed name and pronouns experienced: 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34% decrease in suicidal ideation, and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts. [A 2022 study](#)<sup>31</sup> found that gender-affirming care for youth was linked to 60% lower odds of moderate or severe depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality. Trans people’s history is and has always been one of resilience in the face of discrimination and stigma, and creating resources and networks of care to keep each other safe. Disability justice requires that we create non-stigmatizing, affirming environments for trans folks, including access to trans health care and gender-affirming care which is critical to our collective physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

# MEDICAL CARE AS A SITE OF CRIMINALIZATION

Reporting and surveillance are not medically necessary or relevant to care, and there are ways in which medical care systems have served to uphold anti-trans stigma and criminalization. Anti-trans laws that require health professionals to report supportive families of trans youth as “child abusers” exploit the pre-existing [racist apparatus of mandatory reporting](#)<sup>32</sup> where health care workers are deputized as agents of the state. [This family policing system](#)<sup>33</sup> has long been used by healthcare professionals to accuse Black and Indigenous parents of child abuse and neglect; obtain and report unconsented medically unnecessary drug and alcohol tests; coerce medical interventions; and separate children from families contending with poverty and other systemic injustices, instead of providing supportive resources.

Likewise, pathologizing trans people as having “gender identity disorder” and the concept of “fixing” what some anti-trans physicians saw as a psychological issue, rather than one that requires gender-affirming care, ties the medical industrial complex to trans elimination. So do things like conversion therapy, forcefully detransitioning young people, denying their bodily autonomy and not allowing them to make decisions for themselves.

Until the 1980s, the US government supported trans care as medically necessary, and public and private insurers had no basis upon which to reject coverage of trans care.<sup>34</sup> In 1980, anti-sex worker, anti-trans “feminist” Janice Redmond, a seminary-trained ethicist, not a clinician, wrote a position paper titled, “*Technology on the Social and Ethical Aspects of Transsexual Surgery*” for the Department of Health and Human Services. In it she makes the same assertions about trans people commonly found in far-right anti-trans propaganda; however, unlike other extremist propaganda, this misleading report informed HHS’ position on trans medical care. Redmond was the architect of the anti-trans stance the US government adopted in the 1980s, a stance which soon spread to private insurers leaving the American trans population without access to medically necessary health care.

# NAMING OUR VALUES:

## CRIMINALIZATION IS ANTITHETICAL TO CARE, HEALTH AND HEALING

Trans and gender-affirming care is recommended by all credible major medical and nursing associations and is life-saving. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Nurses Association (ANA), National Nurses United (NNU), the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, the Endocrine Society, the American Public Health Association, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and more, [all agree that trans care is medically necessary and life-saving](#).<sup>35</sup>

More than 20 medical organizations have joined an [amicus brief](#)<sup>36</sup> against Governor Abbott, led by the American Academy of Pediatrics, defending transgender adolescents in Texas, in which they state that denying gender-affirming care to adolescents who need it would irreparably harm their health.

Complying with laws preventing young people from accessing needed care is contrary to ethical and professional standards of health professionals as defined by the [AMA](#),<sup>37</sup> [ANA](#),<sup>38</sup> [NNU](#),<sup>39</sup> and [NASW](#).<sup>40</sup> This creates an environment in which service providers have no good options. It should be obvious, but a law that requires professionals to put themselves at risk of censure by their respective licensing boards for providing essential care is a bad law. Our coalition of advocates, health practitioners, impacted community members, public health workers, and people working across social justice movements recognizes that legislation governing medical care should be informed by medical science, and the communities impacted by the legislation, and should not criminalize folks simply because they are seeking and/or providing care, especially when it is care that mainstream institutions systematically fail to provide. Criminalization, arrests and incarceration accelerate poor health and premature death, and exist in diametric opposition to [public health principles](#)<sup>41</sup> and healing justice.



Some of the anti-trans bills even target social transition when we know this leads to a vastly improved quality of life. [Research](#)<sup>42</sup> on the impact of childhood and adolescent social transition on adult mental health finds that any adverse mental health outcomes are due only to the experience of gender-based harassment as youth, not at all due to [social transition](#). Children who socially transition in a supportive environment report [positive mental health outcomes and high self worth](#).<sup>43</sup> There is more compelling evidence on the benefits of social transition and basic gender affirmation by supportive adults than there is for most psychotherapies. Fighting anti-trans legislation is also an undeniable [suicide prevention measure](#).<sup>44</sup>

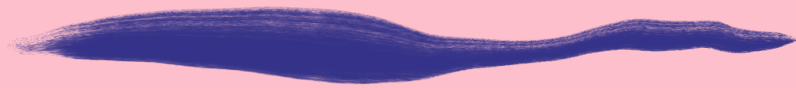
At the same time that these measures have criminalized wanted gender-affirming care for trans and nonbinary young people, they endorse non-consensual surgeries imposed on intersex children. These procedures, some of which cause sterilization or impair sexual sensation, and which many intersex adults have identified as profoundly harmful, are often imposed on children without consulting them at all, or at such a young age that it would be impossible for them to participate in the decision. When we assume that all people fit within a binary female/male model, we miss out on the range of human variation and reality of gender and [sex as a spectrum](#).<sup>45</sup> There are many conditions that do not match up with expectations of biological sex as a binary system. All bodies deserve care and respect, whether secondary sex characteristics are typical, atypical, naturally occurring, or augmented with medical interventions.



**All bodies deserve  
care and respect.**

# #DEFUNDPOLICE

**IF WE CARE ABOUT TRANS LIBERATION,  
WE MUST DIVEST FROM THE CARCERAL STATE**



**Criminalization of gender-affirming care is a direct consequence of funding the prison-industrial complex instead of communities.**

**New criminalization laws are a result of, and lead to more funding for surveillance and policing which leads to more incarceration, and less money for life-affirming efforts.**

# WHAT CAN ORGANIZERS AND ADVOCATES DO

## TO SUPPORT TRANS PEOPLE, AND RESIST THE CRIMINALIZATION OF GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE?

### BUILD STRONG MOVEMENTS WITH UNBREAKABLE SOLIDARITY

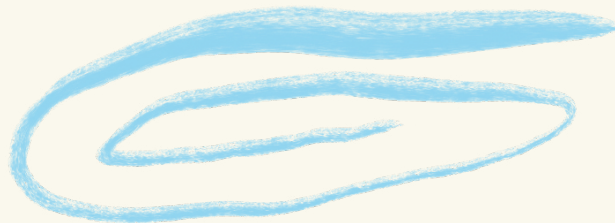
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- Abolitionists and defund organizers must organize against heightened criminalization of Black and Indigenous trans young people and other trans people of color and trans people with disabilities. We cannot end police or prisons while creating new ways to deploy and fill them.
- Cis women and feminists must [roundly reject any attempts](#)<sup>46</sup> to use the supposed “protection” of women as a cudgel to harm other women, nonbinary or Two Spirit people or trans men. While often referred to as a particular type of feminism, [TERFism](#)<sup>47</sup> is not feminism. Extremist right-wing Christian groups have bankrolled TERFist groups as a way to fracture movements and roll back the accomplishments of feminist, trans, and queer movements.
- The recognition of trans rights and humanity cannot be selective. Resist anti-trans legislation and assault in ALL forms—from anti trans sport bills, to bathroom panic bills, to the mere refusal to use gender-neutral language in policies.
- In a transphobic world, going after trans people is a political calculation that the GOP believes will win their transphobic base. Transphobia must be organized against so it is no longer a “winning” political strategy. The so-called culture wars (which are life and death struggles—LGBTQ+ discrimination, immigration justice, racial justice, abortion care) are deployed to specific material ends to maintain certain hierarchies under racial capitalism, with criminalization as a tool. Gaining ground means fighting on multiple fronts—in consciousness raising, political education and messaging, in courts, in legislatures, in our neighborhoods, and on the streets.

- Attacks on trans people have continued under both Republican and Democratic administrations. Supposed allies are often absent, silent or even worse [actively silence](#)<sup>48</sup> and harm trans activists calling attention to murderous policies. While folks mobilized more broadly for trans rights under Trump, successfully fending off bathroom panic bills and other anti-trans legislation, under Biden the mobilizations have been more anemic. We cannot afford weak coalitions and feckless leaders that sacrifice the most vulnerable rather than fiercely protecting them. We must reject normalization, desensitization, silence and inaction, and fight to defend and protect trans people.

**“The thing that has really stood in the way of these bills are teenagers who are standing up. That’s what the public is latching on to, are the stories of young people. You normally think in Washington that it’s like interest group versus interest group. No, this is really an interest group versus individuals. And that, to me, was really heartbreaking. That we’re willing to put our young people at risk like that.”**

– Imara Jones (Looking behind the wave of anti-trans bills, Politico 2021)



## SHIFT DISCOURSE, SHARE INFORMATION

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### Language is also a place of struggle.

- bell hooks

- Avoid disinformation. It can be easy to make an already bad situation worse by sharing well-meaning takes from folks who don't have all the facts. That spreads panic and makes it even harder for the most affected communities to make well-informed decisions about how to protect themselves and each other. Look for local, trans-led organizations and other reliable sources of information. Amplify their messages instead. For e.g. [www.txtranskids.org](http://www.txtranskids.org) has frequently updated Know Your Rights (KYR) materials, Calls to Action (CTAs) and more created by the Texas trans coalition.
- Reject anti-trans rhetoric and archetypes that rely on one of the oldest anti-LGBTQ criminalization tactics: painting trans and LGBTQ people and those who support us as “predators” endangering the safety of white women and children. Reject language around “grooming” and associated rhetoric and tactics, such as age-gating/rating. Never share this rhetoric, and talk to people in your life about why it's wrong. Point to the real threats to children and young people—criminalization, barriers to healthcare, stigma, and violence.
- Never treat trans existence as up for debate. Advocating for space in newspapers, universities, and so on for cis people to debate issues of life and death for trans people leads to trans death. Eliminationist campaigns should not get platformed. We need more space for trans journalists, writers, filmmakers, artists, scholars, and organizers to share their work and engage with one another.
- Remember, [sex is not binary](#)<sup>49</sup> but rather, [exists on a spectrum](#).<sup>50</sup> Gender is not binary either. Sex and gender are separate but connected things. People who insist on an alternate reality (that sex or reproduction are binary, or that gender is binary) lack knowledge, are misinformed, or have an another motivation for denying reality. Don't participate in denying reality. Keep learning.

## CARE AND DEFENSE

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- Normalize resounding support, acceptance and love of trans people. Follow their lead about how to best support them.
- Support trans children in [making a safety plan](#)<sup>51</sup> in case of compulsory outing by “concerned adults” under the pressure of mandated reporting laws. Help them strategize around and mitigate the risk of being beaten, kicked out of their homes, or harmed in even more serious ways.
- Support trans people updating their identification documents, getting health care, and sharing emotional, financial, and informational resources. Take risks so that they don’t have to.
- Support and defend trans people and communities in places with heightened criminalization of trans existence. Support and defend trans people who have fled these places.

**Follow the lead of trans people on how best to support them.**

**Divest from criminalization, banishment and stigma invest in gender self-determination through vibrant, interdependent communities.**

**DIVEST FROM**

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- More cops, more policing, more child removal, or more criminal laws—regardless of whether they are offered by GOP or Democrat administrations. Reject “help” in the form of more hate crime laws, funding for police or prosecutors, nonconsensual removal of trans children from families with unsupportive parents, or new criminal laws about misgendering, discriminatory denials of health care, or other anti-trans harm. These strategies only create more harm.
- More money to policing and carceral systems that [criminalize trans people](#).<sup>52 53</sup> LGBTQ+ youth overall are more likely to experience juvenile incarceration—in part due to how LGBTQ+ kids are forced to engage in self-defense against bullying and violence.
- Surveillance, especially in technology, which is easily weaponized against marginalized communities. Be wary of measures that directly include increased state surveillance, or coerce private companies into engaging in additional surveillance, including under the guise of age-restriction or age-gating.
- Street sweeps which invariably target unhoused trans and gender-expansive community members.



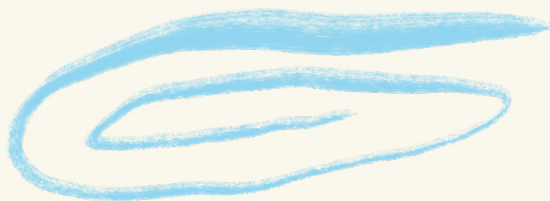
## INVEST IN

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- Invest in and support trans people’s access to quality education, healthcare, housing, public spaces, recreation, supportive community and activities that bring joy. Support the Transgender Law Center’s [Trans Agenda for Liberation](#).<sup>54</sup>
- Amplify trans voices, and particularly voices of Black and Indigenous trans people, trans people of color, trans immigrants, trans disabled and neurodivergent people, trans young people, and trans working class and poor people (in media, social media, campaign demands, etc.).
- Support local groups led by trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people of color and people with disabilities. You can find a list of some excellent organizations on the Trans Justice Funding Project’s [grantee list](#).<sup>55</sup>
  - » In Texas, support the Transgender Education Network of Texas, Black Trans Advocacy Coalition, Organizacion Latina de Trans en Texas, and Texas Two Spirit Society.
  - » In Florida, support Arianna’s Center, Trans Inclusive Group, the QT Project, and the Gender Advancement Project.
  - » In Arkansas, support Intransitive and Lucie’s Place.
  - » In Alabama, support The Knights & Orchids Society (TKO), TAKE Birmingham, and AllowMe.
  - » In Idaho, support Add the Words Idaho, Inclusive Idaho, and the Montana Two Spirit Society.
- Support and fund national trans-led organizations like Black and Pink, Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF), Transgender Law Center, Marsha P. Johnson Institute, TransLatin@ Coalition, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and TransLifeline, and intersex led organizations like InterAct and Intersex Justice Project.



- Support and fund independent media like [TransLash media](#) that uplifts trans stories.
- Share expressions of support for trans youth on social media using the hashtags #LetKidsPlay #ProtectTransKids.
- Use this moment for fundraising and trans justice infrastructure building to support various needs, similar to how abortion funds function.
- Invest in mental health resources that support trans people like [fireweed collective](#), [trans lifeline](#) and the [National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](#).
- Invest in and support emergency funds, legal resources and referral networks to help families navigate family court, Child Protective Services, and more.



## TAKE ACTION

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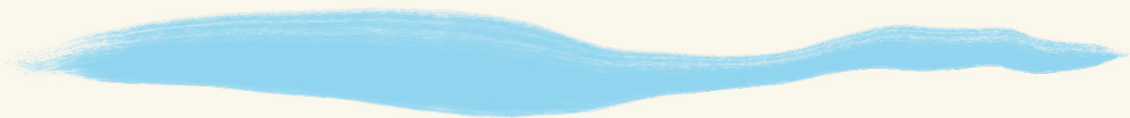
- If you are a healthcare provider and/or part of medical and health associations speak up in support of trans youth. Those committed to “doing no harm” must not renege on established medical guidelines and providing lifesaving care.
- If you’re a healthcare provider, sign up for [Transgender Law Center’s medical expert panel](#) and help review medical records for trans jailhouse lawyers trying to put together cases about denial of medical care in prison.
- Strategize across movements: As [Stephen Thrasher points out](#),<sup>56</sup> a defense of the criminalization of trans parents needs to draw on the criminalization of trans sex workers, poor Black queer ppl & HIV criminalization... There is a good history to draw upon here, mapped out by [@seroproject](#) [@HIVIsNotACrime](#) [@BLACKandPINKorg](#) etc. But it is NOT a “Gay Inc” playbook. It has a different play book and requires tossing out respectability politics...trans parents are up on criminal charges. Abolitionist defenders are needed now, not fundraising reformers... Once someone has been accused of a crime, legacy orgs don’t know what to do. For instance, the Communist Party wound up defending the Scottsboro Boys bc the NAACP didn’t like to take cases where Black men were accused of raping white women. The parents of trans kids are going to be accused of awful things -- of “perverting” their children, and worse. The legacy orgs have no structure to deal with criminal law or extra-legal defense tactics (ie, defending the homes of trans kids Black Panther style)... The tactics need to draw more from civil disobedience, appealing to teachers, doctors and social workers who refused to cooperate, and actions akin to eviction blockades -- finding ways to surround the homes of parents who have been put on notice.”
- Draw inspiration from [international struggle](#)<sup>57</sup> and strategies, and [massive wins](#)<sup>58</sup> abroad. The far-right which has endured many, [many losses](#)<sup>59</sup> recognizes this as a long fight. We must see the long arc, ground ourselves in histories of resistance, [support young people](#),<sup>60</sup> and refuse defeatism as we organize to build power for the futures we need.

## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

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*Organize to get your state to pass proactive protective laws like*

- Minnesota which just proposed a new law protecting families of trans kids. Modeled after the bill proposed in March by state Sen. Scott Wiener in California, SF4525 would [make Minnesota a sanctuary state](#)<sup>61</sup> for families fleeing Texas, Idaho, and Alabama and block out of state judgments, search warrants, arrest warrants and extradition. 16 other states are planning similar bills.
- New York's [Reproductive Health Act of 2019](#)<sup>62</sup> which authorizes non-MD advance practice clinicians to provide care in anticipation of the fall of Roe.
- States that have considered or passed [laws about access to health care for trans people](#)<sup>63</sup><sup>64</sup> through private insurance, Medicaid, or if incarcerated.



# GLOSSARY

**ELIMINATIONISM:** Policies and campaigns to systematically exclude a certain group from society, through censorship, suppression, expulsion, or outright eradication.

**ETHNONATIONALISM:** The term ethnonationalism (or ethno-nationalism) elicits understandings and forms of nationalism that regard ethnicity and ethnic ties as core components of conceptions and experiences of the “nation” ([www.oxfordbibliographies.com](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com)).

## **GENDER-CRITICAL FEMINISTS / TRANS EXCLUSIONARY**

**RADICAL FEMINISTS (TERFS):** Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists or TERFs are anti-trans radical “feminists” whose ideology doesn’t allow for trans people to have self-definition or any autonomy over their gender expression. They have a decades-long history of allying with anti-feminist causes in denying trans people access to health care, and other human rights. Many TERFs now prefer to call themselves “gender critical,” a euphemism akin to white supremacists calling themselves “race realists.”

**GREAT REPLACEMENT THEORY:** A white nationalist conspiracy theory that white people are being rapidly replaced by nonwhite immigrants and people of color. This theory has been brought from the fringe to mainstream by right-wing politicians and media commentators, and has been cited in the screeds of mass shooters from El Paso, Christchurch, and Buffalo.

**NATALISM / PRONATALISM:** the policy or practice of encouraging the bearing of children, especially through government support of a higher birth rate ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

# GLOSSARY

**SOCIAL TRANSITION:** Dressing in clothes that match your gender, wearing your hair as you like, going by the pronouns you want, etc. There is compelling evidence on the benefits of social transition for trans people, including increased self worth and positive mental health outcomes.

**STOCHASTIC TERRORISM:** The public demonization of a person or group resulting in the incitement of a violent act, which is statistically probable but whose specifics cannot be predicted ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

**WHITE NATIONALISM:** White nationalism is a type of racial nationalism which espouses the belief that white people are a race and seeks to develop and maintain a white racial and national identity. Many of its proponents identify with and are attached to the concept of a white nation, or a "white ethnostate". Analysts describe white nationalism as overlapping with [white supremacy](#) and [white separatism](#), often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhites (Wikipedia).

**WHITE SUPREMACY:** The belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

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## SAFETY RESOURCES:

[www.transafety.network](http://www.transafety.network)

[How to Avoid Anti-Trans Conversion Therapists – Health Liberation Now!](#)

[free pdf guide available]

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