

101

ANTI-LGBTQ ORGANIZING

By Heron Greenesmith | June 2022

Introduction

Anti-LGBTQ advocacy, led by the Christian Right and far-right online communities, is woven into nearly every sector of the contemporary U.S. Right. With the ascent of the Trump administration, as the Christian Right gained considerable power to influence local, state, and federal power, anti-LGBTQ advocacy once again became a rallying point around which various factors of the Right allied themselves. Christian Right organizations, right-wing internet and media, and anti-transgender feminists and gender critical activists leverage anti-LGBTQ rhetoric to inform local, state, and federal laws and lawmakers. These groups deliberately use anti-LGBTQ advocacy to mobilize supporters, influence policy, and gain control of government institutions like school boards and public health departments. This work opens the door for larger right-wing coalitions to criminalize abortion, defund healthcare and public schools, and limit voting rights. Anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and legislation has tangible impacts on the lives of LGBTQ people across the U.S., motivating discrimination, harassment, physical assault, and homicide.

This 101 explains the who and the what of modern anti-LGBTQ advocacy. For more information and to read further on all of the topics below, see the reading list at the end.

Who

These are the sectors of the Right setting the cultural context and organizing against LGBTQ people, rights, and equality.

Christian Right

Christian Right advocacy organizations like the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Heritage Foundation, and the Family Policy Alliance are funded by billionaires like Betsy Devos and the Wilks Brothers.

These organizations are: writing model legislation and coordinating anti-LGBTQ legislators through coalitions like the Promise to America's Children; funding and supporting lawsuits to undermine LGBTQ-inclusive legislation and bolster anti-LGBTQ legislation; and providing the larger anti-LGBTQ movement with ideas and arguments to support their goals. See, for example, the Christian Right's [drafting of and support for laws](#) that bar transgender girls and nonbinary people from competing in school sports.

Far-Right Online Communities and Right-Wing Media

Far-right online communities spread anti-LGBTQ misinformation through online forums and social media, and are amplified by more widely-consumed right-wing outlets like Fox News that rely on outrageous stories to drive ad

revenue. This disinformation takes the form of bad-faith campaigns, memes, doxxing, and outright propaganda. See, for example, Fox News' [continual coverage of anti-trans sports bills](#), while it fails to cover more important issues to women's sports like underfunding and sexual violence.

Gender Critical & Anti-Trans Feminists

Anti-trans feminist and gender critical organizations are platformed by other sectors of the anti-LGBTQ Right to give their advocacy the appearance of a broader base of bipartisan support than it actually has. See, for example, the [platforming of anti-transgender feminists](#) to justify banning transgender and nonbinary students from school sports.

What

These are common issue areas for anti-LGBTQ organizing. Together, these issues cover nearly every area of life for LGBTQ people, showing the impacts of anti-LGBTQ advocacy.

Conversion Therapy

Secular, or non-religious, conversion therapists wrongly claim to be able to change someone's gender identity and sexual orientation. Religious conversion therapy organizations and practitioners continue to operate out of the reach of state attempts to bar conversion therapy.

Defamation

Anti-LGBTQ leaders use inflammatory rhetoric to libel and slander LGBTQ people. For example, falsely labeling LGBTQ people "groomers" to imply that they are seeking inappropriate sexual relationships with children. Defamation has been used by the Right to attack LGBTQ people for more than fifty years.

Education

Local and state lawmakers are pushing legislation to ban the discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in state-funded schools. These laws attempt to outlaw the teaching of LGBTQ historical figures and comprehensive sexual education, and sometimes even forbid referring to a student's, teacher's, or other staff member's own sexual orientation or gender identity.

Health Care

Anti-LGBTQ advocates attack health care access for LGBTQ people, particularly transgender and nonbinary people, through legislation, litigation, nonscientific research, and public messaging campaigns. The Christian Right advocates for religious exemptions for health care providers to deny service to LGBTQ people and their families.

Facilities

Anti-LGBTQ advocates seek to restrict LGBTQ people's access to bathrooms, changing rooms, and other facilities, causing severe physical health problems and fostering harassment and discrimination.

Sports

Anti-transgender organizations coordinate to bar transgender and nonbinary students from participating in school sports. Some legislation permits or requires athletes competing on girls teams to undergo invasive genital examinations in order to participate in scholastic athletics.

Find Out More

These articles and webinars will help you build your knowledge further.

To Read Right Now

- **The Narrative on Trans Rights Is Being Shaped by Right-Wing Media.** Heron Greenesmith and Alejandra Caraballo. *Teen Vogue*. 2022.
- **New Anti-Trans Promise: An Ohio state legislator may have leaked a new set of anti-trans “principles” endorsed by three major anti-LGBTQ organizations.** Heron Greenesmith. *Political Research Associates*. 2021.
- **Gender Ideology Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.** Heron Greenesmith. *Political Research Associates*. 2020.

In Depth

- **Bodily autonomy under attack in the US: Access to abortion and gender-affirming care dismantled by Christian-Right theocracy.** Heron Greenesmith. *Center for Research on Extremism*. 2022.
- **WATCH: This year and next in anti-LGBT advocacy.** *Political Research Associates*. 2021.
- **WATCH: You will not erase our kids: The high stakes fight for trans liberation.** *Political Research Associates*. 2021.
- **A Room Of Their Own: How Anti-Trans Feminists Are Complicit in Christian Right Anti-Trans Advocacy.** Heron Greenesmith. *Political Research Associates*. 2020.
- **The Christian Right on the Gender Frontier: The Growing Anti-Trans Offensive.** Cole Parke. *Political Research Associates*. 2016.

Become an Expert

- **Transphobic and Anti-Abortion Policies are a Direct Threat to My Religious Freedom.** Susan Frederick-Gray. *Religion Dispatches*. 2022.

- **The Same Toxic Christian Right Theology Supports Both the Online Bullying I Experienced and the Cruel Anti-Trans Policy in TX – And it's Not Remotely Fringe.** Chrissy Stoop. *Religion Dispatches*. 2022.
- **Aberration of Common Sense: Anti-trans activists and the ramifications of the Bell v. Tavistock decision for transgender youth.** Heron Greenesmith. *Political Research Associates*. 2021.
- **Antisemitism Meets Transphobia: White nationalists and anti-trans feminists use the same conspiracies to target trans and Jewish folks.** Heron Greenesmith and Ben Lorber. *The Progressive*. 2021.
- **New Report: White Evangelicals are America's Most Anti-Trans Demographic, But Encouraging Data Overall.** Chrissy Stoop. *Religion Dispatches*. 2021.
- **Brave New World: The legal landscape post-Bostock.** Heron Greenesmith and Alejandra Caraballo. *Political Research Associates*. 2020.
- **Betsy DeVos Is Complicit in Evangelical Right's Assault on Trans Athletes.** Heron Greenesmith. *Political Research Associates*. 2020.
- **Gender Critical Support Board Promotes Therapists Who Reject Transgender Identities.** Heron Greenesmith. *Teen Vogue*. 2020.