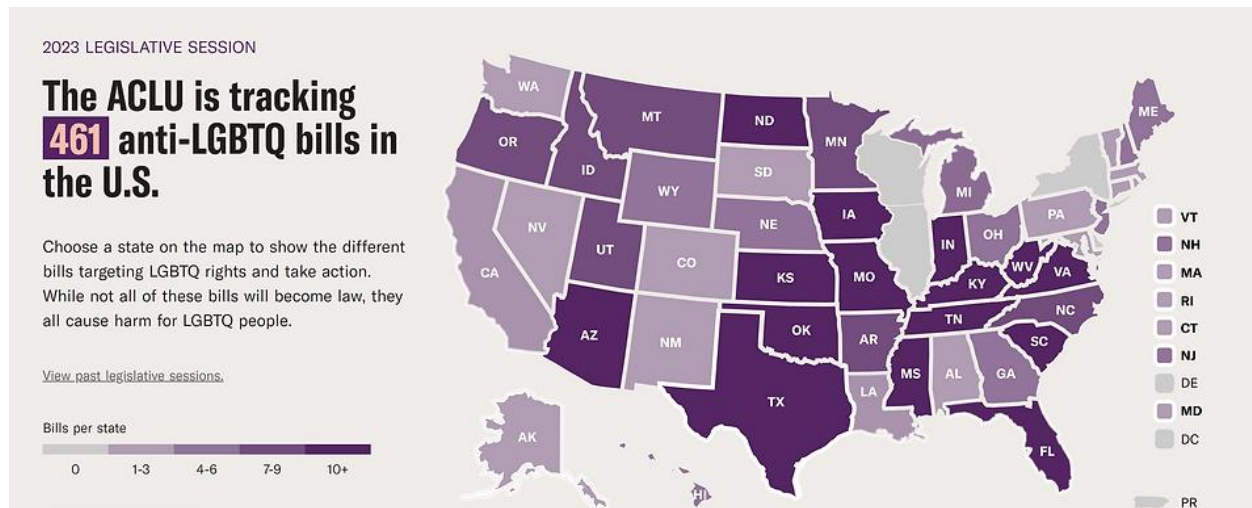


ACSSW Unified Statement on Anti-LGBTGEQIAP+ Legislation



As of March 21, 2023, 461 anti-LGBTGEQIAP+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender expansive, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual+) bills have been introduced in statehouses across the country. These bills currently exist in over 40 states and have more than tripled in number since January of this year (Human Rights Campaign, 2023). Anti-LGBTGEQIAP+ legislation places transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive youth amongst the most targeted by these pervasive attacks. Aimed at severely limiting access to school resources, social support systems, and medically necessary gender-affirming healthcare, these bills run counter to decades of research supported by every major U.S. medical association (Human Rights Campaign, 2023).

Regardless of legislative status, the introduction and political discourse surrounding these bills leaves lasting effects on the health and well-being of LGBTGEQIAP+ identities. A national survey of shows that 93% of transgender and nonbinary youth worry about being denied access to gender-affirming medical care, 91% worry about being denied bathroom access, and 83% worry about being denied the right to play sports due to state or local laws (Trevor Project, 2022). And

as of January 2023, 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth experienced worsening mental health due to the current wave of anti-transgender legislation and surrounding debate.

In alignment with our organization's mission, Association of Counseling Sexology and Sexual Wellness (ACSSW) unequivocally stands in solidarity with the LGBTGEQIAP+ community. ACSSW remains committed to advocating and fighting alongside our friends, family, coworkers, peers, and community members affected by these divisive and harmful bills. As professional healthcare providers, we respect client autonomy as an inherent right and believe that medical decisions reside with clients, their caretakers, and their physicians. Gatekeeping access to age-appropriate, medically necessary, gender-affirming care is unethical and can increase the risk for negative mental health outcomes for gender diverse youth (ACLU, 2021).

ACSSW is devoted to providing support, resources, and education that promotes the health and wellbeing of these populations. We condemn all violence and discrimination directed at LGBTGEQIAP+ identities and adamantly oppose legislation threatening these communities. These bills stand in direct opposition to our core values, ethical codes, and professional responsibilities as healthcare providers. ACSSW will continue working to improve standards and delivery of care for LGBTGEQIAP+ populations and remains steadfast in our collective fight against oppression.

We know reading these reports of legislation targeting our communities can be difficult. If you have experienced violence or need support, please see the resources listed below:

The Trevor Project: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Trans Lifeline: <https://translifeline.org/>

GLAAD: <https://www.glaad.org/transgender/resources>

References

American Civil Liberties Union. (2021, April 1). Doctors agree: Gender-affirming is life-saving care. <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/doctors-agree-gender-affirming-care-is-life-saving-care>.

Human Rights Campaign. (2023, March 27). Map: Attacks on gender-affirming care by state. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/attacks-on-gender-affirming-care-by-state-map>.

The Trevor Project. (2022, December 15). 2022 National survey on LGBTQ youth mental health <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>