

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Mississippi Governor Signs Cruel Bill Restricting Access to Affirming Healthcare for Transgender Youth**

**JACKSON, MS** – Today Governor Tate Reeves signed into law HB1125, a bill that prohibits transgender-related healthcare in Mississippi for people under the age of 18. The law takes effect immediately.

In recent weeks a grassroots coalition of organizations across Mississippi has worked hard to fight against the bill, including through legislative contact campaigns and a protest at the Mississippi statehouse. Organizers have also worked with medical providers and families to prepare them for passage of the bill and will continue to work with families and individuals on healing and resilience strategies and legal questions about their rights.

Mississippi is one of two states (the other being Utah) with anti-transgender healthcare laws currently in effect. Similar bans have passed in Alabama and Arkansas but are not in effect due to court orders. A similar law in South Dakota takes effect on July 1.

**Jensen Luke Matar** (*he/him pronouns*), Executive Director of **The TRANS Program**, said:

“The message is heard loud and clear. Gov. Reeves’ decision to sign HB1125 into law has communicated that our state leaders are willing to prioritize political gain over the health and wellbeing of our youth. They have disregarded reputable and consistent research that spans decades, healthcare professionals and their expertise, parents and their ability to care and provide for their children, every major medical association (representing over 1.3 million doctors in the U.S.) and human life. In addition, the language used surrounding this bill has been exposed as untruthful and further demeans, excludes and isolates a community that has been long suffering. The implications are deadly. The TRANS Program will continue to support trans youth of Mississippi and looks forward to holding our political leaders accountable.”

**Mickie Stratos** (*they/them pronouns*), president of **The Spectrum Center of Hattiesburg**, said today:

“Gov. Reeves’ decision to sign this bill is an act of violence. He and the lawmakers who pushed this bill in Mississippi are willfully ignoring the unique needs of transgender young people, interfering with their medical care and sending a stigmatizing,

exclusionary message. Advocates for transgender equality in Mississippi and beyond will continue doing everything in our power to care for and protect trans youth in our state.”

**Rob Hill** (*he/him pronouns*), State Director of **Human Rights Campaign Mississippi**, said:

“This is an outrageous attack on LGBTQ+ Mississippians and their families. Like the politicians who wrote this bill, Gov. Reeves doesn’t have an ounce of medical training. He is in no position to dictate the decisions that doctors and their patients make about health care. This is nothing more than an attempt to inflate his flagging poll numbers ahead of a difficult re-election campaign.”

**Dr. Megan B. Craven** (*she/her pronouns*) Treasurer **PFLAG Gulfport**, added:

“MS has once again put its youth in harm’s way with the passage and signing of such detrimental legislation. To blatantly ignore and misrepresent scientific evidence will have life-threatening implications. PFLAG Gulfport vehemently continues to echo the national PFLAG stance to fight against anti-transgender violence and discrimination by standing ready to rally with the community and other organizations to fight through democracy and education. We as the collective LGBTQ+ community must not give up but maintain focus.”

**Tina Fritz** (*she/hers pronouns*), **PFLAG Gulfport** Parent, said:

“HB 1125 is a harmful legislative solution to a problem that doesn’t exist. It goes against evidence based care as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics. I want big government out of the medical care of my child. HB 1125 strips me of my rights as a parent and our legislators are hypocrites.”

**Stacie Pace, PhD, MSN, ACNP, AGNP, CCTS-I** (*she/her/they pronouns*) of Spectrum: The Other Clinic, said today:

“We are exhausted, simply exhausted, by the amount of ignorant pseudoscience that has been used to push this bill and others like it into existence. The science and data are clear, and there are ample robust guidelines in place for healthcare providers to follow in the care of transgender people of all ages. What is also clear is that anti-trans sentiment is being given as much consideration as actual scientific research. We will of course abide by the law as it stands in Mississippi and cease to provide any services to those under the age of 18. For those who have passed this law, we truly hope that they do not understand what they have done. Because to understand the implications of this bill’s passage is to be complicit in the increased suicidality and discrimination of this vulnerable population. Our hearts are heavy with the burden of knowing what this can lead to.”

**Lee Pace, MSN, FNP, OTC** (*he/his/they pronouns*) of Spectrum: The Other Clinic, said:

“I can’t understand the hatefulness that is expended on this small vulnerable population. It is incomprehensible. It is clear there is no room for good faith discussion here. We tried that, and they continue to deny what every major medical association has researched and published on for decades. Transgender medical care is safe. It is life-saving. And it is necessary. Try as they might, trans people cannot be legislated out of existence.”

**Ivy Hill** (*they/them pronouns*), Director of Gender Justice for the **Campaign for Southern Equality**, said:

“To the transgender youth who are reading the news today and feeling excluded or fearful for the future, please know that not even the most craven political attack can stop the love and support that millions of people across the country feel for trans youth. We’ll always be there to fight alongside you, we’ll devise new strategies to get you to the care you need, and we’ll create spaces and community where you receive the support that enables you to thrive. To say this year has been challenging for trans youth is a devastating understatement – but please, don’t lose hope for what’s possible ahead.”

**Sybastian Smith** (*he/him pronouns*), Organizing Director at the **National Center for Transgender Equality**, said:

“Expert health care providers have been studying and providing transition-related health care for more than four decades. Decades of clinical research and experience show that transgender youth who have access to the care they need see a positive impact on their mental and physical health. Mississippi lawmakers have willfully decided to ignore proven scientific studies and the self-reported lived experiences of trans youth in the state. Trans youth have been used and are continuing to be used as political pawns. While legislators recklessly cause harm to marginalized communities, our youth are left without the support they need to live, thrive and survive! National LGBTQ organizations around the U.S. will continue to pour our support, love and resources to the trans community, especially the youth, in Mississippi.”

Data from [The Williams Institute show](#) that at least 99,000 LGBTQ+ people above the age of 16 live in Mississippi. Around 13,500 adults in Mississippi [identify](#) as transgender.