

CTA Name: Equality Act (Senate Bill 393)

Date Created: 3/7/22

Who to call/contact: Senators Klobuchar and Smith. Thank them for co-sponsoring the bill. Urge them to raise awareness about the fact that Republicans are using LGBTQ+ kids as political pawns and the very real mental health risk LGBTQ+ kids face whenever Republicans propose or pass legislation or executive orders targeting LGBTQ+ kids.

Background:

You may have heard recent news about anti-trans legislation being passed in Iowa and South Dakota, a recent executive order issued by the Governor of Texas that targets trans kids and their parents, as well as Florida “don’t say gay” bill. What many folks may not know is that these actions are part of a concerted effort by Republicans to make transphobia and homophobia a centerpiece of the upcoming midterm elections.

Below are a few excerpts from news articles describing this phenomena.

We want to contact Senators Klobuchar and Smith both to encourage them to continue to press for the passage of the Equality Act (which would outlaw this type of state legislation and executive action) and to encourage them to raise awareness about the reality that by using our LGBTQ+ kids as pawns in their political battle, Republicans are increasing the likelihood they will be bullied and harming our kids’ mental health.

Excerpts: “A new record was set in 2021 for the filing of anti-transgender legislation, with more than 110 bills put forward by

right-wing lawmakers in at least 37 states. From Hawaii to Alaska, Texas to Maine, Republicans went on a full-court press to target trans people.

Taking inspiration from the 2004 anti-gay marriage wedge that GOP strategist Karl Rove used to engineer the re-election of President George W. Bush, **Republicans in state after state are planning to make transphobia a centerpiece of their midterm election effort in 2022.**

And just like the right-wing strategists of yesteryear, most of today's bigotry-peddling Republican politicians don't actually give a damn about the fundamentalist ignorance that motivates transphobia. Whether they believe in it or not doesn't matter; for them, transgender Americans are just the latest oppressed group to be demonized for the sake of votes and power.

States like Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Texas, and others saw efforts to block trans people—again, particularly trans young people—from accessing needed medical care. In Tennessee, the fight was over who can use what toilet. Montana and South Dakota saw Republicans up in arms over what gender people can list on their identity documents. Blocking aspiring trans parents from adopting or fostering children was the goal in Iowa, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

Copypat bills have been filed in one locale after another, pushed by right-wing extremist groups like the Heritage Foundation, the Eagle Forum, the Alliance Defending Freedom (a designated hate group according to the Southern Poverty Law Center), and others.

Alphonso David, president of the Human Rights Campaign, which tracks anti-LGBTQ legislation pinpointed the reasons for their attacks: “These bills are not addressing any real problem, and they’re not being

requested by constituents. Rather, this effort is being driven by national far-right organizations attempting to score political points by sowing fear and hate.”

Although the bills are largely political maneuvering by Republicans to rev up their fundamentalist Evangelical Christian voting base, the real-world consequences could be catastrophic for trans people.”

People’s World.org.

“Throughout the first week of 2022, state lawmakers in at least seven states proposed laws that would limit the rights of transgender and nonbinary youths. Republican lawmakers in Arizona, Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, New Hampshire and South Dakota introduced at least nine measures that target trans and nonbinary youths, such as their ability to participate in sports, receive gender-affirming care or use the bathroom.

The legislative push within the first few days of 2022 quickly follows what some advocates have labeled the “worst year in recent history for LGBTQ state legislative attacks.” **NBC News, January 7, 2022.**

Call and/or email Senators Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar:

Sen Tina Smith: [Phone: \(651\) 221-1016](tel:6512211016) (St. Paul office)

Email: <https://www.smith.senate.gov/share-your-opinion>

Sen Amy Klobuchar: [Phone: \(612\) 727-5220](tel:6127275220) (Minneapolis office)

Email: <https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/email-amy>

Sample Script:

I am a constituent and member of Indivisible St. Paul. I live at (insert address). I am calling to thank you for co-sponsoring the Equality Act and ask that you continue to champion this legislation.

I also ask that you use your position to speak out against the anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and executive actions that Republicans are proposing and passing in many states. While these bills purport to be for the sake of protecting our children, in fact they are nothing more than bullying disguised as legislation. The mere introduction of proposed bills causes great harm to our children and must be stopped.

I am (*add your story, e.g. “a teacher/social worker” or “parent/friend/grandparent of a trans/LGBTQ child” or “trans/lesbian/gay man” etc...*) and know firsthand the mental health struggles LGBTQ+ kids face. **(tell your story if you have one).**

According to a 2019 study by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), nearly 60% of LGBTQ+ students reported experiencing discriminatory policies or practices at school. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of transgender students and more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of nonbinary students, reported experiencing discrimination.

LGBTQ+ young people who experienced victimization at school were more likely to miss school, had lower GPAs, had lower self-esteem, and had higher levels of depression.

The Equality Act will put an end to such legislation and ensure that every young person is protected from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity.

I wanted to share this information with you to drive home how necessary and important the Equality Act is and how important it is to speak out against Republican efforts to use trans and LGBTQ+ kids as pawns in the upcoming election.

Thank you,

(name)