INTOLERANCE AT PLAY IN THE USA

2022 is 'poised to become the year of the most anti-LGBTQ legislation' in the United States | Opinion

Excerpt from The Inquirer by Joert E. Abueva Mar 2, 2022



Last week, a Republican-backed bill passed Florida's House of Representatives prohibiting teachers and school staff from discussing sexual orientation and gender identity. The bill targets kindergarten through third-grade classrooms. Backers argue that children of this cohort are unprepared to process topics that are not "age-appropriate." Should Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican, get a companion bill passed in the Florida Senate, it would open the door in July for parents to sue school districts that dare to bring up these topics.

Critics have denounced the bill as being anti-LGBTQ, saying that the ban, once imposed, could very easily extend to older children as well. President Joe Biden tweeted that the bill was "hateful" and pledged that his administration would fight to protect the LGBTQ community.

The message this bill sends to LGBTQ youth is undeniable: Something is inherently wrong with them. By supporting it, lawmakers exacerbate outright marginalization, anxiety, and depression for the youngest members of our community.

In the first week of 2022, at least seven states put forward laws that would limit the rights of transgender and nonbinary kids and their ability to participate in sports, use bathrooms, and receive gender-affirming care. In Texas, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott instructed the state's child welfare agency to investigate any gender-affirming medical procedures for transgender youth as "child abuse."

"The drumbeat of debate and proposed legislation against the LGBTQ community is turning into a wholesale — if not well-orchestrated — attack."

I encourage anyone who is interested in these issues to join us in supporting the rights of LGBTQ people of all ages. With the change of seasons, and ominous political clouds billowing by, it's time for renewed commitment and action.

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